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William Sterling Lacy

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William Sterling, D.D.

MEMORIAL

ADDRESSES

SERMONS

William Sterling Lacy:

MEMORIAL,

ADDRESSES,

SERMONS.

"A good man leaveth an inheritance."

RICHMOND, VA.:
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CONTENTS.

PAGE.

MEMORIAL. By Rev. James P. Smith, ... 5

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM (two versions), . . . 15

ADDRESSES.

BEAUTY, ... 19

WAR REMINISCENCES, ... 42

SERMONS.

1. ORDINATION, ... 62

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—DANIEL xii. 3.

2. INSTALLATION, ... 74

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."—2 CORINTHIANS v. 20.

3. DEDICATION, ... 89

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.—PSALM xlviii. 12, 13.

4. COMMUNION, ... 106

"In remembrance of me."—LUKE xxii. 19.

5. THANKSGIVING, ... 112

"For there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family."—1 SAMUEL xx. 6.

6. CHRISTMAS, ... 125

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." LUKE ii. 32.

PAGE

7. A HAPPY HOME, ... 137
"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."—JOHN xi. 5.

8. WHAT SHE COULD, ... 149
"She hath done what she could."—MARK xiv. 8.

9. THE CHOICE OF BARABBAS, ... 161
"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."—JOHN xviii. 40.

10. FIRST DUTIES NEGLECTED, ... 171
"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."—1 KINGS xx. 40.

11. IS THE YOUNG MAN SAFE? 179
"And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?"—2 SAMUEL xviii. 29.

12. CHRISTIAN COURAGE, ... 190
"Add to your faith, virtue."—2 PETER i. 5.

HYMN—"Now the Day is Over," 199

MEMORIAL.

By Rev. JAMES P. SMITH, D. D.

IT is a pleasant task to write of one so good and true as the subject of this sketch. When there are only "things lovely and of good report" to be remembered, the thoughts of a friend of many years flow with pleasure and the pen moves with ease. The wise man says, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance," and it is a pious duty to perpetuate the profitable memory of those that have served God faithfully in their generation.

William Sterling Lacy was born in Raleigh, N. C., March 25, 1842. His father was the Rev. Drury Lacy, D. D., then pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Raleigh, and for some years president of Davidson College; and his mother was Williana Wilkinson, daughter of William Wilkinson and Elizabeth Smith. He was the grandson of the Rev. Dr. Drury Lacy, president of Hampden-Sidney College, an honored and eloquent minister in Virginia. So to him came the inherited traits, the traditions, the covenant promises of one who is—

"The son of parents passed into the skies."

His mother was taken from him when he was but four years of age, and he scarcely remembered her from whom he inherited his physical frame and appearance, and something of her refinement of manner and taste; and, no doubt, also the love of music and of verse. A step-mother,

who was Mary Rice, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Rice, became a fond and faithful mother to him, and was dearly loved in return, and most gratefully remembered.

In a home of godliness and love, of truth and duty and cheerfulness, there was a childhood of gentleness and purity. Amid such influences there came, according to the promise of his father's God, the early growth of piety. The grace of God came he never knew how soon. From youngest days he was led, and gladly followed, in the ways of love to Christ and obedience to his word. At six years of age, small in frame, he stood on a table in the Sunday-school and recited the Shorter Catechism. At ten years he was the leader of the singing among the children of the school. At eleven he wrote a sermon on the text, "And now also the axe is laid at the root of the tree," a copy of which is on our table. The image of the axe at the root of the tree, ready to cut it down, had taken strong hold of his mind. Under three heads, he follows a logical method, closing with an earnest appeal. It was the boy's beginning of a life of good preaching. The catechism, the sweet singing and the serious sermon were the promises of his good and faithful life.

When William Lacy was thirteen years old, his father removed to the academic village of Davidson, as the president of the college. At the early age of seventeen, in 1859, he was graduated from the college, showing both the precocity of his mind and the directness with which in a scholarly home and amid such studious surroundings he was led through his course of learning. It was his disadvantage that he completed the college course at an age when he should have been entering upon it. From Davidson College he went at once to Union Theological Seminary, at Hampden-Sidney, Va., and began his preparation

for the ministry. Here he was as one at home. Amid the traditions of his ancestors, surrounded by those to whom he was bound by ties of kindred and common tastes and aims, he was most happy and contented. He studied with ardor the great themes presented in the class-room. He led the singing in the seminary chapel. He led his companions in the meetings for prayer. With perfect naturalness and simplicity he loved the play on the grounds, and enjoyed the merriment of the choice social circle on "the hill."

All this quiet and happy life in the seminary retirement was interrupted by the rude alarms of the coming war between the States. Though unfitted physically for the strenuous life of a soldier and the exposure of the camp, his convictions of right and his manliness soon led him, with his college and seminary companions, into the ranks of the Confederate army. He enlisted as a private in the Rockbridge Artillery, and served in the campaign of the Virginia Valley with unshrinking fidelity. The story of his soldier days is told with vigor and with humor in his lecture on "Reminiscences of the War," published in this volume. Physically unfitted for so much exposure, and wishing rather to preach the gospel, he became the chaplain of the Forty-seventh North Carolina Regiment of Infantry. For this service he was peculiarly fitted; by his genial and loving spirit having access to officers and men in camp and field and hospital, and winning their entire confidence and affection.

When the war closed he returned to Raleigh, and as an immediate recourse in the time of destitution and social upheaval he became a teacher of the young. He had been licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Roanoke, in Virginia, October 2, 1862; and now turning again to the great desire of his heart and the aim of his life, he was

ordained to the ministry in April, 1869, by Abingdon Presbytery, and became the faithful pastor of the Anchor of Hope and Cove Churches, in Southwestern Virginia. Though greatly attached to his people, and most zealously engaged in his work, he found the vigorous climate too severe for his health. In 1873 he resigned his pastorate, and returned to North Carolina, and as the pastor of Buffalo and Euphronia Churches, in Moore county, he had a happy and fruitful ministry for fifteen years. In 1885 he was transferred to the church at Jonesboro, in the same Presbytery of Fayetteville. In June, 1888, he accepted the call of the Second Presbyterian Church, of Norfolk, Va., and in that charge for eleven years, with great desire and ardent zeal, he gave the most untiring devotion to all the duties of his ministry It was the crowning period of his life and ministry. In the year in which he came to Norfolk, when he was forty-six years of age, he was united in marriage to Miss Mary Shepherd, of Jonesboro, N. C., finding in her that good wife who is "from the Lord," a companion of congenial tastes, his prudent friend, and invaluable assistant in his studies and labors, and especially in the pastoral work of his Norfolk ministry.

From the first he had the affection of his own Norfolk flock, and he soon won the confidence and esteem of all the ministers and people of the city. His church grew in numbers and in the strength of good organization; we believe it grew in intelligence under his teaching ministry, in piety, and in fruitfulness under his example and the touch of his devout and loving spirit. This relation, so happy and so fruitful, was dissolved at his earnest request August 15, 1899, because of seriously impaired health.

Since his young days at college, Dr. Lacy was the victim of some form of rheumatism, which again and again through the years brought periods of pain and of interrup-

tion in his work, and compelled him to seek change of location. Time after time he sought relief from various treatments. It bent his form and crippled his movements. It frosted his hair with a premature old age. It was a constant limitation put upon his life and energies. In some degree it gave disappointment, which was sustained by a cheerful piety, yet brought a measure of pathos to his character, and of tenderness to his ministry. It was the never-absent minor chord in a spirit and life that were naturally bright and cheerful. It brought his life to an earlier end, while yet in mental force and activity and in the unfailing zeal of a devoted service of Christ he was unwearied and in his prime.

He sought relief at the Clifton Springs Sanitarium; but rallying from a serious illness there, he returned to the Carolina which he loved. At Raleigh, in the good home of a loving brother, he found most watchful and tender care in the few weeks of failing strength. At last, on October 14, 1899, surrounded by those who loved him, he passed away into the land where "the inhabitant shall not say, 'I am sick.'"

Willie Lacy, as so many loved to call him, was from childhood a child of grace, his faith abiding steadfast, his eye single, and his whole nature gladly consecrated. He was a devout man and full of the Holy Ghost, pure, gentle, affectionate, unworldly; simple in his habits and refined in his tastes; loving good men and women, loving music and hymns, loving humor and play, loving books, and most of all, loving Christ and his church. He loved much, and he was much loved. We scarcely know one who has had as large a circle of friends most gratefully and tenderly attached to him.

By nature gentle, he was also by grace lowly-minded. Meek of speech and humble of spirit, he was not timid in

duty. He proved his courage on the battle-field, and was faithful to principle in every emergency or conflict in the church. Without a vestige of self-assertion, it is most remarkable that the strong qualities of his Christian manhood found constant recognition among his friends and in the courts and affairs of the church.

He preached sermons that were most carefully prepared, with scholarly exposition of the word, and faithful and earnest application. In pastoral service he excelled, knowing how to speak a word in season, and to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he was himself comforted of God. He had a facile and graceful pen, contributing papers of popular attractiveness and of influence to the church journals.

An excellent presbyter, familiar with the history, constitution and the rules of the church and its courts, and being neat and methodical in all his literary habits, he rendered valuable service as clerk. He was at different times the stated clerk of the Presbyteries of Abingdon and Norfolk, and of the Synod of North Carolina. From both of the Synods, North Carolina and Virginia, he had been for many years a director and trustee of Union Theological Seminary. He had an inherited acquaintance with this school of the prophets, and a profound interest in its welfare. For several years he had been also a trustee of the Assembly's Home and School at Fredericksburg. At the time of his death he was a valuable member of the Assembly's Committee on the Preparation of a Hymn-Book. He was himself the author of several excellent hymns and of church tunes that have found acceptance in the churches.

Sorely lamented on earth, he has entered the fellowship of his fathers and all the saints, and the praises which will never end.

Here on earth—

> "The sweet remembrance of the just
> Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust."

Our sketch will be made the more faithful and just when we add the closing paragraph of the tribute from the pen and from the heart of the Rev. Samuel M. Smith, D. D., of Columbia, S. C.:

"When it comes to the inner man, the individuality *in propria persona,* one feels an instinctive shrinking; to write of him as I knew him almost savors of a breach of confidence, and yet what a vivid personal portrait, altogether lovely, rises before me and clamors for presentment! the amplitude of tenderness that, having mothered the declining years of his aged and helpless father, found its highest expression in the ideal husband; the assiduous considerateness that enveloped him as an atmosphere and crowned him with the very royalty of courtesy under all circumstances; the faultless taste, flower of an artistic sensibility so consummate as to lie hard by the territory of pain; the consciousness of capabilities undeveloped united with an ideal so pure and high as to fill his soul with the deep pathos of comparative failure; a nature open at every pore to beauty of every kind, that made him silently, though none the less sadly, sensitive to the disfigurement that long disease had laid on his poor, maimed body, while a gracious humility prevented his recognition of the charism on character not less plainly the mark of that same suffering; the large talent of loving that likened him to the disciple who lay on the Master's breast; the almost feminine delicacy of feeling that shrank from all impurity and grossness as from positive pain; an instinct of the essential fitness of things betrayed often in an amusing way by the look of blank dismay on his speaking countenance when some blunderer would be

guilty of a tactless word or a witless deed; his wonderful voice, its rich, but muffled resonance, deep, soft, sonorous both in speech and in song.

"Always an intense North Carolinian, it was fitting that he should return to die amid the scenes of his childhood, and rest at last on the bosom of the Old North State. Within her bounds there lies the dust of no nobler son than Willie Lacy."

SELECTED WRITINGS

OF

William Sterling Lacy.

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

I.

Jehovah is my Shepherd,
  Therefore I shall not need;
In cool and verdant pastures
  He bids me rest and feed;
By tranquil, flowing waters
  He doth my footsteps lead.

My soul he oft restoreth,
  For oft, alas! I stray;
And for his Name's sake only
  He guides me in the way
Of right, and love, and duty,
  Before him all the day.

Yea, when I walk with trembling,
  Through death's dark valley drear,
Thou, Jesus, wilt be with me;
  No evil will I fear.
Thy rod and staff will comfort,
  Thy presence ever cheer.

In face of adversaries,
  Before me thou wilt spread
A table, overflowing;
  While on my willing head
The oil of health and gladness
  Most freely dost thou shed.

My cup indeed runs over,
  And now I surely see,
Goodness and mercy only
  Shall always follow me,
And in thy house forever
  My dwelling-place shall be.

II.

A PARAPHRASE.

Jesus, Jehovah, thou my Shepherd art!
Oh! what a hope to cheer my trembling heart,
And bid me trust!
I shall not want: for every care and grief
Thou, Lord, I know, wilt send me quick relief,
Though in the dust!

In pastures green and grateful to the eye,
Fresh, cool and tender, there he bids me lie,
And bids me rest!
Or leads me by the waters flowing soft,
Whose lull invites repose—yet takes me oft
Unto his breast.

And when I wander—oh! how oft I do—
This gentle Shepherd still is kind, and true,
And quick to bless.
He seeks my soul—restores; controls his wrath;
Leads me, for his own Name's sake, in the path
Of righteousness.

When comes the hour of darkness, grief or pain;
When shadows thicken, human hopes grow vain,
When death draws near—
E'en then, when walking in the valley's gloom,
When fades the world away with all its bloom—
I will not fear.

For thou art with me—precious All-in-all!
Thy presence near, no evil can befall,
No fear alarm—
Thy rod and staff bring calm and peace divine,
Are symbols to me of thy love, and thine
Almighty arm.

A banquet large and free dost thou prepare,
In presence of my foes, and bidd'st me share
Thy love divine.
My head hast thou with blessings crowned, and now
My cup runs over! Jesus, grant this now—
Let me be thine.

As I look back upon the path I tread;
I see how tenderly thy hand hath led
Through all life's day.
Thus can I say, with humble faith in thee,
Goodness and mercy still shall follow me
Alway! Alway!

Yet grant, Jehovah, this thy child's request—
May I among the anthems of the blest
Thy praises swell.
In that fair home where thou, Lord, dost abide—
Jehovah, Jesus—nestling by thy side,
There may I dwell.

BEAUTY.

IT is related of Robert, only son of Sir Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton—what a name!—known afterwards as Robert Bulwer Lord Lytton, at one time Governor-General of India, but better known to the reading world as Owen Meredith, that once in his early life he was invited to deliver an address to the undergraduates of Balliol College, Oxford. His father—the one with the long name—the great Edward Bulwer, as we know him, distinguished as author, scholar and statesman, a distinction his illustrious son worthily sustained—somewhat skeptical as to the youth's ability to acquit himself on such an occasion creditably, asked him of what he would speak. "I shall speak of Wisdom," was the son's reply. "I didn't know that you had any to speak of," was his father's answer. So when I announce my theme as "Beauty," you may make the same cruel remark; yet, like you, I may make *observations* on beauty.

As far back in the history of human thought as Plato there has been the philosophical division of all things knowable under the three terms of "the true, the beautiful, the good." "These three ideas," says the eminent essayist and theologian, Dr. Shedd, "cover and include all that can possibly come before the human mind as a worthy object of thought and action. The idea of the Good lies at the bottom of all religion, and of all inquiries connected with the chief concern of man. The idea of the True lies at the bottom of all science, and of the scientific

tendency in individuals and nations. The idea of the Beautiful underlies all those products and agencies of the human soul that address the imagination—all art, and all literature in the stricter signification of the term as the antithesis of science." There is interaction, interdependence, it is true; but in general it may be stated: Religion concerns life, and duty and holiness is its aim; science relates to knowledge, collects and collates facts—knowledge is its object and truth its result; art cherishes taste—form is its means and beauty its end. This appeals to the kingly attribute of the imagination, while they appeal to the conscience and the reason. This seeks the perfection of the medium through which the holy and the true may be seen. If this be so, and that it is can be proven and may be assumed, it appears that beauty, as a distinct contemplation, occupies a subordinate place to holiness or truth.

The department of æsthetics, though confessedly not so important, has its place along with metaphysics and ethics. Æsthetics is the science of the faculty of taste, or of man's æsthetic nature, which is a complex of intellect and emotion, and is so far purely psychological. It is also the science of the beautiful in objects, and is so far not psychological; but the same is true of the science of ethics, which embraces both the science of man's moral nature and of the good.

Is there such a thing as beauty? Need I ask such a question in this presence? The inscription in memory of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of Saint Paul's, may well be repeated: *Si quaeris monumentum, circumspice* (if you desire evidence, behold!)

Ah! everywhere in this dear old commonwealth, whether in the flashing waters of her bays and streams, or among the majestic piles of nature's architecture in her

mountains; in her simple rural homes, or in her abodes of refinement and culture, we see convincing proof. Grand old Virginia, not only mother of States and statesmen, of heroes as noble as ever filled the trump of fame, of men gallant and true, but of women worthy to stand by their side, who made the men what they were, of women pure, lovely, gentle, illustrating the graces of refined and Christian womanhood.

Locke and the Sensational School maintained that the beautiful was but a synonym for the agreeable. Berkeley and Hume revived the theory exploded by Plato in his *Hippias,* that beauty consisted in utility. Alison, sustained by Lord Jeffrey, attributes the idea of beauty to association. Others "find the beautiful in suitableness, proportion or order." All of which are but partial statements of the theory that beauty is variety in unity. This theory is as old as Aristotle, was embraced by Cousin, and has been forcibly defended and supported by Sir William Hamilton.

I shall not argue in detail against these various theories, nor detain you in considering the dry philosophy of the subject. It is true—and that error is always most dangerous which teaches a half truth—it is true that beauty pleases, that for its end it is useful, that association enhances its delight, and that in harmonious combination the taste is gratified. An appeal to consciousness is sufficient argument without separate refutation of each view advanced. That the beautiful is not the agreeable, nor the useful, nor the harmonious, nor aught else but simply the beautiful, every one knows; for the admiration awakened by the contemplation of a beautiful object is not allied with any consideration of these traits, which, indeed, may not at once be perceived. It is true such traits may appear, but there is as much difference between the beautiful and

the agreeable (for instance) as between the fragrance and the flavor of a strawberry. The appeal is to an entirely different appetency of the soul.

Again, a child admires a lambent flame, a rosy cloud, a gorgeous flower, a brilliant gem, to whom there is no thought whatever of the utility or agreeableness of the object, no pleasureable emotion elicited by association, no comprehension of variety in unity, but only a sense of the beauty, and hence of the attractiveness, of the object.

> "What is it makes my Phyllis fair?" you say.
> "Is it that she her mother doth obey?
> That she can sew, and cook, and sweep a room?
> That she can read her French, and take the gloom
> From the dull face of classics by her wit,
> And dreary mathematics, conquer it?
> That she can dress with taste, or dance with grace,
> And pretty nothings say before your face?"
> Of this I know not aught. I only see
> A form as lissome as a willow tree;
> A face and hands as fair as lilies pure;
> A smile that somehow each heart must allure;
> Rich mobile lips, and cheeks that, like a rose,
> Blooms to make glad—a blush that comes and goes;
> Dear, tender eyes, so deep, and true, and sweet;
> They tell of a fond, loving heart, repeat
> The wondrous story of a woman's power—
> The fairy phantom of a passing hour.

What then is Beauty? Using the language of a distinguished Southern essayist, Rev. Dr. Otts, and paraphrasing Bishop Butler's theory of Virtue, I define: "Beauty is a peculiar quality of certain objects, actions, thoughts and expressions, which quality is perceived by taste, and which perception is accompanied by a peculiar emotion, distinct from all others, which is called the emotion of the beautiful."

Beauty then is inherent. It is not a derived, a deduced

idea, but a primary dictum of the soul, an immediate judgment of man's complex nature. On any apparition of beauty there is immediate recognition, immediate consciousness. The conscience is the analogue of taste and rightness of beauty. When a moral action is presented, the judgment at once acts; there is moral approval. When an object of beauty is presented, the mind at once perceives; there is æsthetic approval. Just as the conscience must judge of the rightness and must approve, so the taste cannot but pass judgment on the beautiful and pleasureable emotions are awakened. In other words, by a law of his being, a man cannot help admiring the beautiful. Edmund Burke's tribute to the wondrous beauty of Marie Antoinette strikes a responsive chord in the human soul; and the reputed reply of Leicester to the haughty queen when charged with vacillation in his loyalty because of the beauty of Mary of Scotland, whether true history or not, is true philosophy, "As God hath given her beauty, and crowned her by virtue thereof one of earth's queens, man must give her the homage of his heart."

This excursion into the field of ethics furnishes the solution of other difficulties environing the subject. Rightness is absolute, yet the decisions of conscience are variable. This is because the judgment is uninformed. So beauty is absolute, though tastes differ. The more the conscience is enlightened, the more uniform will be its decrees. The more taste is cultivated the more consonant will be its opinions. The word, because the revealed will of God, is the rule of rightness. So the revelation of the Creator in nature and in the soul is the rule of beauty; and as the True and the Good lead us to him, who is light, and "whose name is Holy," so, by another and most fascinating line of thought and study, are we led to him

who is love, "the chiefest among ten thousand; yea, altogether lovely."

But leaving this abstract discussion, let us consider some of the phases of beauty as exhibited in the world we dwell in, and the divine purpose thereof.

Beauty appeals primarily to the sight. It is a very natural transition of meaning which allows its use in reference to hearing; so that we speak, and speak correctly, of a beautiful song, or a beautiful voice. The reason for this duplication of meaning, I take it, is chiefly because (as expressed by Coleridge) "the eye and the ear are the great inlets of our acquired knowledge, the only media by which different minds can communicate together, and the organs by which we receive from the material world the two classes of pleasures which, while they surpass all the rest in variety and duration, are the most completely removed from the grossness of animal indulgence, and the most nearly allied to the enjoyments of the intellect."

In its simplest, most rudimental sense, beauty applies to color. This the child and the savage alike enjoy. Their untutored taste is pleased with that which appeals strongly and pronouncedly to the eye. Hence red is the favorite color. It is an advance, and calls up a more complex emotion, to contemplate form. So in the other great channel by which taste traverses to the outer world and brings joy to the soul. Sound furnishes the simplest representation of beauty to the ear. Hence the child's delight in the drum or the horn, and the pleasure the rude gong or tomtom gives to uncultivated heathen ears. It is a like advance, and awakens more exalted and complicated feelings, to understand and appreciate harmony and musical phrase.

It is curious and interesting to note the results of ex-

periments that have been made under scientific inquiry among the sightless and the mute to ascertain what, if any, community of thought obtains between sight and sound. It is said that the blind judge red, represented to be the brightest and most pleasing to natural taste, to be like the blare of a trumpet; blue, described as the softest and most soothing to the eye, like the note of an Eolian harp, and a gorgeous sunset like the music of a brass band. While on the other hand, the deaf essay to describe the note of a flute, represented as soft and faint and delicate, by a strip of white cloud; the playing of a violin, represented as brisk, animated and joyous, by a rapid shower and the dancing stream, and the music of an organ and a vast congregation, grand and inspiring, by the rushing of the wind through a great forest and the swaying of mighty trees.

Art, whose mission is to cherish the beautiful, is nearest its aim and most closely approximates its ideal when it perfectly represents nature. That which is grotesque, bizarre, distorted, exaggerated, while it may attract attention, vitiates taste and ultimately morals. Dress is pronounced to be a fine art, and hence fashion seeks to emphasize what is symmetrical and pleasing, though sometimes the emphasis is enormous. A full and well-developed arm is pleasing to taste, and hence a full sleeve. What abnormal development of the muscles, *deltoids, biceps flexor cubiti,* and *brachinalis anticus* we see in our well-dressed ladies of to-day, if we may judge by their exaggerated sleeves! Nor is it surprising that the question is asked on the streets, "Who is that slender maiden between those two dowager-corpulent sleeves?"

Even what is conventional must be faithful to a just conception. In other words, art must be true. Beauty is consonant with truth. The orator has reached consum-

mate perfection when his studied eloquence seems the unstudied utterance of the heart. As music phrases the emotions under given conditions, and in sad or joyous strain bears the soul on its celestial wing, it is the perfection of art. From nature too come the purer forms of architecture, and the students of this art of design learn the great principles of their grand and noble science from the pillared temple of the vaulted earth. The lesson is too obvious in painting and sculpture, which are termed indeed, and are strictly, the representative arts.

Nature, then, is the ideal of art; and who can view the beauty of the world, so varied, so affluent, so prodigal, without wonder, admiration and gratitude?

The very condition of her existence is to the eye of reason and the soul of love cause for admiration. As Edwin Atherston, one of England's minor bards too little known, well expresses it—

> "Oh! it is beautiful to see this world
> Poised in the crystal air, with all its seas,
> Mountains and plains majestically rolling
> Around its noiseless axis day by day;
> And as it turns, still wheeling through the immense
> Of ether, circling the resplendent sun
> In calm and simple grandeur."

Contemplate with me that daily miracle of nature as it appears on these sweet June mornings—"dark summer dawns," as Tennyson finely phrases it—or as I witnessed it a few days past. You step forth from the confined air of your chamber, the first sensation being that of delicious coolness and exhilaration. The sky is without a speck or stain, rich, dark, mysterious. The stars twinkle industriously in the ebon vault, their myriad eyes gleaming like fire. As your questioning soul looks up in mute admiration they are silent. The winds are whist, the woods

are still. The flowers are heavy with dew and the air with fragrance. In the east hangs low the decadent moon, a glittering silver sickle on a black velvet ground. As her escort a royal guard of stars appears. The golden lamp of Venus burns with an intense and steady blaze of liquid, tremulous light, revealing her conscious beauty; her companion, the mighty and more distant Jupiter, with smaller, but not less brilliant beam, while Saturn, almost eclipsed by their superior lustre, is barely seen, a point of light far away. But, lo! their splendors pale! Along the horizon is a faint glimmer of gray. You glance upward, and see that the ebon hue of the vault above is gone. The stars wax dim and slowly fade from view.

> "The ancient moon hangs on its nether horn
> A frighted ghost."

The skies grow lighter and bluer. Again you turn your eye to the coming morn. Streaks of light, "God's glorious shadow," to use Plato's fine thought, shoot upward to the zenith—at first colorless, then growing cool gray, soft pearl, with the faintest hint of gold and pink, the purest and most delicate of tints, shaded with utmost nicety. It is the daily battle of light and darkness. Now a mist rises, and strips of fleece are seen. They seem the advancing squadrons of the armies of the King, planting their white banners on the deserted field, as the hosts of darkness sullenly retire. Those white banners suddenly become rose and flame-colored. The whole east flushes and glows at the coming of her lord; and while rays of golden glory from the advancing splendor leap across the heavens, objects of the familiar earth come into view—the dark forest, the old homestead, the open plain. At length he comes! The eye of morn peeps over the eastern hills—

> "Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-top."

And now what a change greets the soul! There is a happy rustle of the leaves. The joyous breeze springs up to tell the glad world of the great transformation. The marshalled clouds move steadily, softly onward as if in triumph. There is a noise of merry music. Happy birds carol in unrestrained glee. Sounds of hope and delight fill the enchanted ear and thrill the soul. All is life, animation, beauty; and this is a daily scene of nature, reproduced in infinite and wonderful variety.

Everywhere and in every way does nature teach the lesson of beauty. The field is ploughed and laid naked—how dark and ugly! but kindly nature soon clothes its surface with herbage. The bleak, bare rock on mountain-side, without soil to nourish vegetation, yet is robed with moss or wears its gray, grave garb of lichen. The blasted pine is draped with graceful vines, and soft colors and outlines—curves of beauty—greet the eye. The little hillock of garish clay that hides from our streaming eyes the form of the beloved is soon, by the tender and gentle hand of nature, mantled in green. Earth that sympathized with our woe hath healed its ugly scar, as Time too softens and soothes the aching sorrow of the heart. So too the chidings of sound are chastened into murmurs of music by intervening air.

Among the varied manifestations of beauty which the world exhibits, let me mention three modes in which nature thus delights the soul—sound, color and motion.

The twitter of birds and the musical carols of those more highly endowed, the sighing of trees, the rustle of leaves, the soughing of the wind and the unceasing roar of the sea, the crash of the thunder and the storm, the whirr of wings, the babble of waters, the patter of rain, the hum of insect life, the coo of doves, and the contented call of kine; what varied and multitudinous sounds strike

the ear, softened by distance, modified by circumstance, or distinct in the evening air, and all blended in indescribable and inimitable harmony!

In color even more lavish is the Author of beauty. Variety, brilliancy, delicacy, adaptation, intensity, and chameleonic change, these add charms that fascinate and entrance. The emerald grass, the silver brook, the sapphire skies, the clouds of pearl or opal, of gold or garnet, and the flowers in whose adorning ruby and turquoise, topaz and amethyst blend their magic hues, and the diamond dew that sparkles on the spray—all wear the smile of the gods, to use Virgil's delicate and beautiful thought.

Nor less in motion is the world garnished with beauty. Stillness is oppressive. Rarely is nature even apparently motionless. The drowsy clover nods his languid head. The field of ripening wheat is never at rest. The boughs swaying in the breeze, the twinkling leaves, the flight of birds, the flitting insect, the fleeting shadows that pass over the field, the sparkle of brooks as they laugh and dance their way to the sea, the tossing billows, the multitudinous smile of the deep, as Homer describes it—all the movements of grace that enliven the world—these likewise add inexpressible attractions. Perhaps it is owing to this beauty of motion that it seems almost impossible for a pretty girl to be motionless in a public assembly.

Ruskin calls attention to this delight of nature in gratifying the taste of man in one illustration which I beg to cite, both for its own lessons and to enrich my discourse with so elegant an extract:

"The sky is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any part of her works, and it is just the fact which man regards with least attention. Every essential purpose of the sky might be answered, so far as we know, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great

ugly, black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue sky, and everything well-watered, and then all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew: but instead of this there is not a moment or day in any of our lives when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. Yes, the sky is for all. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful—never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness; its appeal to what is immortal in us is as distinct as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal in us is essential."

The value which the moral Governor of the universe places on beauty and his delight therein are thus revealed to us. His wise purpose in its bestowment is seen in its relation to sublimity. Add to the idea of the beautiful that of the vast, the infinite, the incomprehensible, and you awaken the emotion of the sublime. You exalt and ennoble even the exquisite enjoyment kindled by the sense of beauty; it is augmented by grandeur and majesty. Beauty awakens admiration, and it intensifies into delight. Sublimity awakens admiration, and it intensifies into awe. The one leads to the love of the Author of beauty, the other to adoration and profoundest reverence. Hence its place and its value in the economy of morals, and as the ministrant of the true and the holy.

Still more is the divine estimate and meaning of beauty seen in the revelation of the final award. Every glimpse that is given us of heaven by the inspired seer is of a place of enchanting and satisfying beauty. All that is beautiful in the loveliest pastoral scenes is depicted with the tongue of the poet and the pencil of the artist. Pure streams whose limpid waters flow in murmurous music, fair trees of richest fruitage and rarest foliage, the verdure and

quiet and serenity of rural delight, and above and over all, the majestic and lavish glory of sunlight without the glare of the sun! All that is beautiful as the product of art, that affluence princely and illimitable could conceive, is represented as a part of its glory. The sheen of rarest jewels, the magnificence of splendid architecture, of severe mould and costliest adornment; the matchless music of nature, of multitudinous voices, of harpers harping with their harps, the eternal melodies and infinite harmonies, the grandest possibilities of this most expressive and emotional of the arts—these are enumerated as contributing to the attractiveness of that realm.

Yet beauty is not only in the seen and the real, in that which is without; it exists in the ideal also. It is not only to be found in dumb, unreasoning nature; it is seen likewise in motive, and meaning, and conduct. There is, it is true, the very purest simple, that is unmixed, undefiled, pleasure in the contemplation of the beautiful in nature, whether in rest or motion. Robertson has well said that "he whose eye is so refined by discipline that it can repose with pleasure upon the severe outline of even a beautiful form has reached the purest of sensational enjoyment."

But the heart craves life. The æsthetic nature is closely allied to the ethical. The fragrant mead is fairer if

> "The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea."

The park, with its noble trees and deep sward, is all the more attractive if

> ". . . the timid deer walks coy
> Beneath the arching limes."

The landscape wrought in consummate skill and revealing the painter's poetic soul is finer and appeals more vividly

to human sympathy if on the bare cliff a living creature is seen, if the hunter scales the perilous crag. Even the twilight, chosen hour of beauty and of love, is dearer to eye and soul because then

"The ploughman homeward plods his weary way."

Hence the word is properly transferred to that which awakens the same or kindred emotion, even not appealing directly to the eye or ear. Thus a syllogism is termed beautiful because clear to the intellect. Different minds apprehend perhaps in different ways. Tastes differ; else how can we understand the language and meaning of a young and aspiring practitioner, however we may pardon his enthusiasm, who, admiring the skill and success of a popular physician, said, "Oh! but he has a beautiful practice! and the other day I was with him when he removed a lovely tumor from a lady's face (she was a hideous-looking old lady), and oh! it was such a beautiful operation!" Or of the cook, weary of experiments with a new and many-patented range, as she comes back to her old stove, well-used and blackened and battered, and exclaims, "Oh! my darlint, but you are a beauty!"

A phrase, a thought, a deed is so called, not merely in the vague and general sense of pleasing or admirable, but because the mind sees and feels order and beauty, as it were, without the intervention of material medium or sense-perception. Thus a beautiful life appeals directly to the soul, and a high moral purpose thrills and transports with an emotion the same in nature, but intenser, deeper, holier.

This, I take it, is the purpose of beauty in the world; not merely to gratify the taste which, untrained, may be a rude whim, a crude untutored ideal, but to exalt, ennoble and refine the moral nature; to garnish truth and to

adorn goodness, that the completest glory of the Supreme One may be manifested in the harmonious blending of the three; for when beauty is divorced from these, which constitute its true strength and support, it fails and is debased. The vine is graceful and fair, but it trails in the dust if it is separated from the stalwart trunk, which, clambering over, it truly adorns. The Greek culture illustrates this. None of the historic civilizations so enthroned beauty, especially beauty of form; where the idea was that of mere physical beauty, it degenerated to effeminate softness, and eventually to luxuriousness and voluptuousness. Even English literature, almost the only characteristic English art, illustrates the same truth. The luscious school of Keats and Shelley, delicate beauty being almost the sole aim; the more sensuous school of Byron and Moore, once the most admired of men, have survived their power; while Milton, with the highest ideal of art, and the most matchless delineation of the beautiful, subordinating the form to the substance—the garb to the figure clothed therewith—making, in other words, the beautiful tributary to the good and the true, still lives and must live, surviving assault of changing fashions, schools of thought and empires of power. Still more is it illustrated in another—for Milton, with all his stateliness and truth and majesty, is in a measure formal, artificial and conventional—in him the acknowledged master, the crowned king of the realm of English letters, to whom all hearts bow in homage wherever nature has worshippers or poetry has votaries—"glorious Will Shakespeare." It is his truthful representation of nature, of human emotion and passion, that makes him the master poet of English speech.

As beauty then has moral power, so is it affected by moral power. How often do we hear the expression,

"——— has a good face," the underlying idea being that lofty thoughts and pure hearts shine out through the human face and transfigure it. This remark finds quaint illustration in the following incident: An artist who had secured an unwilling Chinaman to sit as a model said to him, "John, if you don't look pleasanter I won't pay you." "No use," said John, "when Chinaman feelee ugly, he lookee ugly."

It is not an unfamiliar fact that anxieties, evil thoughts and debasing vices habitually indulged, leave their impress on the physical form. Cares make their furrows on the brow and bend the shoulders beneath their burdens. Want pinches the features. Envy, cherished, photographs itself on the face. Supercilious scorn leaves its ensign in lines about the lip, distrust and conceit in the raised brow, sensuousness about the eye and mouth, malignity in a scowl, and vanity in a smirk; and it is none the less true that the noble feelings have their effect on the countenance, and irradiate and beautify even homeliness itself. Contentment gives placidity and repose to the face. A peaceful or a generous spirit shines forth. Resolution and courage make known their presence and power by firm lip and gleaming eye. Earnestness intensifies, and tenderness softens expression. Purity beams in serene sweetness, and love lights the face as it glows in the heart.

"What makes you so sweet and pretty this fine morning," asked the Ettrick Shepherd of a Scotch lassie. "And don't you know," said the maiden shyly, "that it is because Jamie loves me? He told me so." "I am not surprised," the poet answered, "that he does love you, and that he told you so, but that doesn't make you pretty. He loves you because you are pretty. Think again, little lass." The girl toyed with her kerchief a moment as if

taking in the thought. "I don't know," she answered, "unless it's because I love him; for I do." There was true philosophy, unconscious though it might have been.

That new star that has risen in the literary firmament, and that shines with a lustre as assured and radiant as it is unmatched, who in his simple annals of Drumtochty has given us glimpses of hearts and homes stern, true and noble, and shown the unnoticed sublimity of simple lives, in his latest cluster of stories, tells of Drumsheugh's reward, and how love beautified and glorified that sturdy and rugged character. With inimitable skill and pathos the artist tells the story of a deep, sincere, untold and unrequited love; of the silent devotion to the woman of his choice, though she had married; of his unknown and tireless watchfulness of her welfare, caring for her and her home, educating her son and gladdening and relieving her life, all the while utterly unsuspected. When, late in life, the old man, desolate, misunderstood, was at last—I need not relate how—recognized by her as the benefactor whose kindness had been so unstinted and timely, she asked in perfect simplicity how and why he had shown such favor. The writer, Ian Maclaren, goes on to say:

"He lifted his head, and looked her in the face. 'Marget!' Then she understood.

"He watched the red flow over all her face and fade away again, and the tears fill her eyes and run down her cheeks before she looked at him steadily, and spoke in a low voice that was very sweet.

"'A' never dreamed o' this, an' a'm not worthy o' sic' luve, whereof I hev hed much fruit, an' ye hev only pain.'

"'Ye're wrang, Marget, for the joy hes gien ower the pain, an' a've hed the greater gain. Luve roused me tae wark an' fecht wha micht hae been a ne'er-dae-weel. Luve savit me frae greed o' siller an' a hard hert. Luve kept me clean in thocht an' deed, for it was ever Marget by nicht an' day. If a'm a man the day, ye did it, though ye micht never hae kent. It's little a' did for ye, but ye've dune a'thing for me, Marget.'"

A young lady was asked to parse—not pass—a kiss, and after repeated efforts did so (correctly!) as follows: "Kiss is a conjunction, because it connects. It's a verb, because it signifies to act and to be acted upon. It's a preposition, because it shows the person kissed is no relation. It is an interjection, cast between (at least it sounds like one), and is a pronoun, because it stands for a noun. It is also a noun, because it is the name of an osculatory action—both common and proper (sometimes entirely so)—second person, plural number, because there are always more than one. In gender, it is masculine and feminine mixed. Frequently the case is governed by circumstances and light, according to rule one—'one good turn deserves another'; 'if he smite you on one cheek turn the other also.' It should always begin with a capital letter, be often repeated and continued as long as possible, and ended with a period. Kiss might be conjugated, but when proper it should never be declined."

Thus might a young lady, full of grammar and love, speak; but what says the scientific young medical student?

"A kiss is a paroxysmal contact between the labial appendages attached to the superior and inferior maxillaries respectively of a man and woman or two women. The younger the parties are the more paroxysmal will be the paroxysm, and in case it be observed by the fond father of the paroxysed young lady, there is also likely to be perigee between the paroxyser's pedetic junction and the phalangeal extremity of the metatarsus and other bric-a-brac depending from the old gentleman's right leg. The kiss itself is not the paroxysm. It is merely the vibration of the superincumbent atmosphere, resulting from the expulsion of sweetness from each of the pair of lips engaged in creating it." [1]

[1] Boston newspaper.

And the philosopher says, "A kiss is like the world—not because it is round, or because it goes around—as to shape, being elliptical (a lip tickle)—but because it is made out of nothing and yet very good."

Talent, brilliance of intellect, even interest and animation, make impress on the face and give the charm of beauty. It is said of Madame de Stael that though she was one of the ugliest of women, she could talk herself beautiful in ten minutes. Socrates, too, was by no means a pattern of personal pulchritude, judging from the testimony of contemporaries and the models of him that have come down to this age, yet when delivering his sublime discourses his face shone with an unearthly light. General Richard Taylor, in his vivacious sketches of the war, tells of that noble and gallant soldier General Ewell, whose natural homeliness was the subject of familiar jest, that when lighted with the fire of battle and in personal danger, or when elated with victory, he grew positively handsome.

The question is sometimes asked, and in all seriousness, how may a woman retain her beauty? The answer in part is to be found in the thoughts already suggested. Josephine counselled her daughter, "Be beautiful." "Above all else, to win and do right, be pure and beautiful." A scientific writer in a scientific journal has given the following hints: "True beauty rests on plain living and high thinking, on blood, bearing and brains. A woman beautiful in all else, but wanting mirth, will grow old, sour, thin and sallow; while the merry fun-loving woman will be fresh and sweet despite life's happenings and sorrows. The highest beauty is the beauty of expression, and the cultivation of this requires the crushing out of envy, hatred, malice, and all low motives and passions. The gospel of relaxing, of letting go of one's self, at times is essential to facial well-being. The nervous system, like

the violin, must not be kept always at concert pitch. Beauty means harmony, balance, the mental fire of sensibility, as well as bodily attractiveness. Banish fretting, trivial perturbation, scowling, whining, wailing, excessive laughter and pointless smiling. Health is all-important. Flesh texture and tint, for example, depend upon it. A mild diet, gentle temperature, even digestion, open-air exercise, sleep, and a tranquil mind pertain to good looks. A great deal of beauty at low cost can be obtained through the plentiful use of rain-water, sunlight and open-air exercise." A wiser than this professor has said, "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; a merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

The cultivation of honorable and heroic emotions, principle, purity and exalted moral purpose develop and reveal a spiritual beauty that shines even through the most imperfect medium of physical form, and wins regard and admiration. The fleshly tabernacle is but more or less plastic material. The living soul within is the artist; and as the artist is ever greater than his art, so the character is ever nobler and grander than form or feature.

The soul pays instinctive homage to exhibitions of moral beauty. The slightest act that shows this true loftiness of nature compels fealty from the most reluctant.

Agnes Macdonnell, in the *London Spectator,* gives this incident:

"Unarmed and unattended walks the Czar
Through Moscow's busy street one winter's day;
The crowd uncover as his face they see—
'God greet the Czar,' they say.

"Along his path there moved a funeral,
Gray spectacle of poverty and woe;
A wretched sledge, dragged by one weary man
Slowly across the snow.

"And on the sledge, blown by the winter wind,
Lay a poor coffin, very rude and bare;
And he who drew it bent before his load
With dull and sullen air.

"The Emperor stopped and beckoned to the man.
'Who is't thou bearest to the grave?' he said.
'Only a soldier, sire!' the short reply,
'Only a soldier—dead.'

"'Only a soldier!' musing said the Czar;
'Only a Russian, who was poor and brave;
Move on; I follow. Such a one goes not
Unhonored to his grave.'

"He bent his head, and silent raised his cap;
The Czar of all the Russias, pacing slow,
Following the coffin, as again it went
Slowly across the snow.

"The passers of the street, all wondering,
Looked on that sight, then followed silently:
Peasant and prince, and artisan and clerk—
All in one company.

"Still as they went, the crowd grew even more,
Till thousands stood around the friendless grave,
Led by that princely heart, who, royal, true,
Honored the poor and brave."

Sweeping around a well-appointed host, General Jackson has attacked Hooker's army in the rear, and struck him a fatal blow. Victory again crowns the starry cross. The twilight, faintly lighted by the moon, is spent by the wary and successful commander in reconnoissance, that the coming morrow might wrest even more glorious triumph from the enemy. Galloping back to his lines the intrepid leader by mistake is shot (oh! sad and fateful mistake), and borne sorrowfully and anxiously from the field. The rattle of musketry awakens alarm, and rapid firing opens. The men who bear the wounded warrior

are struck down, and the litter with its precious burden falls. Shells hurtle and scream along the road, minie-balls whistle and sing their song of death, shrapnel shriek through the bushes, and shot tear through the trees and plough the earth. The peril is appalling, and the beloved general, who is so necessary to success, lies helpless and exposed to the awful danger. To shield that precious life, two of his staff—whose names deserve mention with those of Chevalier Bayard or Sir Philip Sidney wherever gallantry and knightly devotion are recognized—Lieutenant Smith and Captain Leigh, lie the one on the one side and the other on the other of that prostrate form, that if possible they might protect his suffering body with their mortal bodies, and spare him further harm.

These are the deeds that make us proud that we are men—made in the image of God.

Let me cite one more example from the page of history.

There was One who dwelt in Eastern climes, centuries ago, lowly in mien, yet with a kingly dignity. He was grave and serious in manner, yet so full of winning sweetness that the poor feared him not and children loved him. While uncompromising in adherence to truth and honor, he was considerate of the weakness and failures of others. Rebuking evil sternly, he yet pitied the offender. His words were marked not less by wondrous kindness than by incomparable wisdom. The marvel of the age in which he lived, he is the hero of all ages. Neither courting the regard of the opulent and cultivated, nor pandering to the prejudices of the populace, arraying no class against his fellow, commending the good in lofty or lowly, and fearlessly condemning the wrong, whether among those of rank and power or his personal friends, he seems the illustration of all that is noble, just or worthy. Devoted to his race and country and seeking their good, there was no

service nor sacrifice he did not undergo for them; yet his love was not narrowed to them, but his strength and sympathy have succored humanity. There is no trait that wins admiration that he did not possess in the highest degree. Of courage undaunted, of fidelity unfaltering, of wisdom unequalled, of tenderness unexampled, his is a character so round and full and sweet, so unique, so complete, as to present to Time the one example needed, as to be worthy to be enshrined in all hearts. I speak of the Man of Nazareth. He has conquered the world—not by arms, nor by arts, not by wondrous inventions and discoveries, nor the trampling squadrons of war—but by the might of love and sacrifice, by the matchless power of perfect moral symmetry and absolute spiritual beauty, by the inimitable and unapproachable splendor of a peerless and complete character.

REMINISCENCES OF THE WAR.

IT has now been (1897) more than thirty-six years since the beginning of the war between the States, as Alexander H. Stephens well designates that era of strife, and nearly a generation since its close in 1865. I have been amazed to note, in seeking to recall whatever of incident and event might be worthy of recital in my own obscure career as a soldier, how fast is fading the memory of those days, how shadowy and uncertain my recollection of certain things that happened; and possibly in my simple story I may not be absolutely accurate. I may have blended the picture of one day with that of another. I shall at any rate seek to tell the truth; it may not be that I extenuate nothing, but certainly I shall "a plain, unvarnished tale deliver, nor set down aught in malice."

I was a student of divinity at our Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Hampden-Sidney, Virginia, when the war broke out. Rev. Dr. John M. P. Atkinson, president of Hampden-Sidney College, organized a company in April, 1861, which I and a younger brother joined, I having just entered my nineteenth year and he in his sixteenth. Before the company was enlisted and accepted for service, in May, 1861, my father, who was a Union man, an old-line Whig, and opposed to secession, refused his consent and withdrew his sons, much to their mortification. Dr. Atkinson's company marched away, with the smiles and blessings of mothers, sisters, and sweethearts, so honored and elated, while I with some others were left behind, taunted, slighted and humiliated. Such was the spirit of the day of our Southern women.

Finishing the story of the career of Captain Atkinson's company, I may say that they were assigned to the Twentieth Virginia Regiment under Colonel Pegram, were engaged in a campaign in Western Virginia under General Robert Selden Garnett, who was killed at Canick's Ford in July, 1861; the enemy being under command of General McClellan; and after less than three months of service were captured near Cheat River, paroled, and sent by General McClellan (as I was told) "back to your books, where you ought to be, instead of in the field of war." So that my fellow-students and the college boys were all back again in their classes, honored by the girls as "prisoners of war."

My time came after a while. I remained at the seminary until February, 1862, when the fall of Fort Donelson and the capture of Island No. 10 convinced my father that every son of the South who could bear arms should enlist, and still in my nineteenth year, I with eight or ten fellow-students of divinity enlisted. How honored were those days of preparation and parting! Matrons and maidens sweet vied in rendering us services of kindness and affection. Young ladies who had never handled tailor's shears or goose, and without experience in fitting, made our garments, hemmed our home-woven blankets, and embroidered our initials in gay colors. I shall not forget the figure we cut in our army clothes of rough country cloth, spun and woven and dyed, cut and made by ladies—we who had hitherto been a trifle dainty about our attire, the cut of our coats, the whiteness of our ties, the stiffness of our collars! How we waddled along with our ill-fitting garments, our knapsacks immense and unwieldy, our vast supply of blankets and our enormous haversacks! You would have thought us a body of emigrants going to housekeeping in some new country. Why

one of our boys was asking the way to "do up" and starch his linen collars, and another, the smallest in stature among us (it was not I), had a haversack of such proportions that he was known, on entering the company, as "the little man with the big haversack"—contracted afterwards to Haversack, and then to "Hack," and then using his initials—for I speak of Rev. J. K. Hitner—J. K. or K. The charming ladies of the Hill, as that seat of secular and sacred learning was and is still called, made for us what was then termed havelocks, a kind of cape or curtain to our hats, to shield our beardless cheeks and lily necks from the burning sun or the winter wind. Well, we soon learned better, how to discard the superfluous and reduce our impedimenta to reasonable proportions and light marching order. We soon eliminated all white goods, especially that depended on starching, we turned over to the quartermaster all but one blanket, we cast aside all literature except a Bible, we transferred to the surgeon all lint and various medicaments which anxious friends had provided (except what was needed for snakebite), and after a while any of us would have been glad to have had one whole suit of clothes—I mean by that, one suit without holes!

Some time in March, after a brief stay in Richmond, we reached our company, the Rockbridge Artillery. I shall not attempt to describe the personnel of a battery so famous. It had been commanded by Captain Pendleton, the Rev. Dr. Pendleton, that godly minister now promoted to general. It was then commanded by Captain William McLaughlin, afterwards promoted to be major, and now an honored and incorruptible judge. It had in its ranks students from Washington College, Virginia Military Institute, University of Virginia, Roanoke College, Hampden-Sidney College, Episcopal Theological

Seminary, at Alexandria, and Union Theological Seminary. It was sometimes laughed at as a kid-glove company, its members called gentlemen; but it never faltered in the march or battle, was engaged in every action when it was in range, suffered in its deaths on the field as heavily as any battery (I do not compare it in this respect with infantry), and suffered more from promotion than any company or regiment in the service. A general, two colonels, a major, five captains, uncounted lieutenants and ordnance officers, half a dozen or more chaplains, four aides-de-camp were taken from its rank and file. It numbered among its men in ranks Robert E. Lee, Jr., the youngest son of General Robert E. Lee, Blackford, McKim, Graham Pendleton, Randolph Fairfax, the Minors, Robinson, the Botelers, Faulkner, Dandridge, Conway, Fishburn, Darnall, Heiskell, Smith, Armistead, Gilmer and others, sons of governors and generals and congressmen, professors and sons of professors, ministers and sons of ministers.

My first smell of war was the famous battle of Kernstown, late in March; but being a raw recruit, and the company being overloaded with them, we were sent back for duty, sometimes as guarding prisoners, wagon trains and camp equipage.

Early in April, 1862, I had an interview with the already famous general and commander in the Valley, Stonewall Jackson. George H. Gilmer, a son of Governor Gilmer, of Virginia, and I, who had nearly completed our seminary course and were ready for licensure by our respective presbyteries, were summoned to headquarters. Neither of us knew why. Our passport through various lines of sentinels to General Jackson's quarters, in the residence of an Episcopal clergyman whose name I forget, at Rood's Hill, was the order of the general, citing us to report at

his quarters at six P. M. A general officer with hat in hand was standing when we entered and soon retired. The room was bare; a bed, a table, and two chairs constituted the furniture. The table had on it a lamp and maps. Gilmer took one chair, at General Jackson's invitation; I, standing for a while, was bidden to take the only other chair, while the General sat erect and stiffly on the bed rail. He began a pleasant, friendly conversation with me (I had met him at my father's home in North Carolina); asked if I were "Willie" or "Drury" (the name of an older brother), and if I remembered him. Still timid and wondering (and secretly hoping for some good fortune), he came and took my hat, which I was holding awkwardly in my hand, and put it on the table. Then he talked as kindly with Mr. Gilmer. After a few moments he told us he had learned we had nearly completed our theological course, and needed only the licensure of our Presbyteries to enable us to do some service, though privates in the ranks, as ministers of the gospel—(evidently *he* did not believe in any one's preaching without being duly authorized by competent presbyterial authority)—and ascertaining when and where the presbyteries to which we belonged met, and, calculating a moment, gave us each a furlough of sixteen days, yet dating so far ahead as to give us two more days. We left rejoicing, and a soldier belonging to the headquarters guard, off duty, seeing the distinguished attention we had received, for the General as any gentleman came to the front door with us, bearing a lighted candle in his hand, and bade us a courteous good-bye; the soldier seeing this, saluted us as we passed rapidly campward, and asked if we were generals or gentlemen!

After licensure and return we rejoined the army near Staunton, just before the engagement at McDowell. His

adjutant, Rev. Dr. Robert L. Dabney, my distinguished teacher of theology, major and chief of staff, says in his *Life of General Jackson,* "From McDowell, General Jackson sent the following modest and laconic despatch, the first of those missives which during the remainder of his career so frequently electrified the country with joy, 'Valley District, May 9, 1862; to General S. Cooper: God blessed our arms with victory at McDowell yesterday. T. J. Jackson, Major-General.'" That was General Jackson all over—the brave fighter, the humble Christian, the true Presbyterian. I have heard it said of a general officer engaged in that action, in commenting on the dispatch quoted, that he remarked, "I suppose it is true. General Jackson knows; but we would have had no victory if we hadn't fought like the ———." This, I may add, is also good theology, as well as fact. Faith is proven by works. God's plans are carried out by human agencies.

It was at McDowell that I first came in hearing of the roar of guns and rattle of musketry. Our artillery was not called into action at that battle, being held in reserve, and the nature of the ground in a mountainous country preventing the use of many batteries. Here first I saw dead soldiers slain on the field. How ghastly and appalling the sight, which afterwards became so familiar! Pallid, soiled with smoke and dirt, their clothing stiffened with their gore; it is no wonder I dreamed of such dead men all that night, and for many a night, though afterwards, at Second Manassas, I lay down on a battle-field among the dead all around me, and slept as peacefully and as soundly as ever in soft bed. Even now, when in dreams I live over those scenes, I recall most vividly those bloody corpses of McDowell. Boys they were of the gallant Twelfth Georgia, led by their former colonel, now General Edward Johnson. That regiment suffered more than any

in the action, because in the evening sunlight they were silhouetted on the crest of the hill overlooking the plain where Milroy's men fought. They were the easy targets of the enemy. General Taliaferro had wisely disposed his troops so that they were not seen. Again and again did General Johnson and their colonel, whose name I do not recall, seek to draw the regiment to the shelter of a ridge behind, where they could do as good fighting and be protected; but they would not recede. A tall, lank Georgia boy expressed the spirit of his comrades when he replied the next day to the question why they did not retreat to the ridge, in his native drawl, "We didn't come all this way to Virginia just to run before them Yankees the first time we ever fout 'em."

I cannot tell you about that far-famed Valley campaign that gave Jackson the imperishable glory that surrounds his name. Military critics have said that it was only matched by the campaigns of Cæsar in Gaul and Napoleon in the Quadrilateral. Transferred for a while, owing to the preponderance of recruits in the Rockbridge Artillery, I served in the Danville Artillery, at that time popularly known as Shoemaker's Battery, commanded by Captain Wooding, and our company was in all the actions of that memorable campaign from McDowell to Port Republic, and in some, especially at Port Republic, hotly and dangerously engaged. I am not able to give you any critical estimate of that campaign; I only saw what one soldier saw, and he young and unused to war's alarms. Nobody ever saw a battle-field—only that little part of the action in which he was engaged. Nor need I seek to describe a battle to you. The scriptures well describe it, "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood."

Of the several great battles in which I was engaged

perhaps it was at Port Republic that I felt more the *gaudia certaminis*—the glory of the warrior. General Ewell had fought the day before the hardly-contested battle of Cross Keys, keeping back General Fremont. At early dawn troops were crossing South River. At sunrise a ringing shot from the enemy's gun swept over our lines. Shields and his army were anxious to coop up General Jackson. We had not had our breakfast when the long roll sounded; in half an hour our battery was at the river; we were munching our crackers and half-cooked bacon, without water or coffee. For three hours, from nine to twelve, we were in heated action. When the enemy gave back, his retreat became a rout, and we chased as boys run rabbits, with dog and yell. That was the first, last and only time I ate any real candy. We overtook a sutler's wagon, boxes all tumbled out in the flight, and I saw the brown paper package, which I first supposed contained pencils, then cigars, and, oh! joy, I found to be peppermint candy. Oh! how good it was to us hungry boys, and oh! how thirsty we were afterwards. After having pursued Shields' broken brigades, about three o'clock we returned, knowing Fremont, with an army strong and sullen, was on the other side of the river. As we approached Port Republic, there on the heights where we were encamped, whence we left with breakfast uneaten that morning, was Fremont's whole army in

"Battle's magnificently stern array."

I must confess to a feeling of terror; under those frowning guns we must pass; but no! He was at bay, the bridges were burned. He could not cross to us; and Jackson took his victorious and jaded army by an obscure road towards Brown's Gap, and Fremont, three miles away, with only short-range guns, could only gnash his

teeth impotently. It was of this action that Dr. Austin Phelps, of Andover, said, "Fremont boasted that his plans were perfect, and communicated to Shields, who with parallel columns was watching the fords and bridges of the river, 'We have gotten the old fox at last; we have penned him at Port Republic, and God Almighty cannot save him.'" But the story is told, and Jackson's brilliant fame is forever assured. That night in Brown's Gap, having had no breakfast, only raw, half-cooked bread and meat, as the skillet and pot were hastily emptied and placed in the "spider wagon," and after eating a pound of peppermint candy for dinner, I had that night my rations of flour and a piece of fat bacon; no utensil whatever. I mixed flour and water together, without grease or salt, in my tin plate, made a sort of dough, wrapped it around a stick and held it before a green-wood fire to cook it. No more! The meat did very well.

There are a few personal incidents connected with that campaign, in that May and June, which I would like to tell; they are illustrative. Of course I was the hero. My mess always sent me out begging—or foraging, we euphemistically called it—whenever supplies were low, which was mostly about three-thirds of the time. They said I was so little that people would have pity on me, and that my voice was so pleading and pathetic when I wanted to buy onions and milk—not mixed, however—that they would give me extra good measure. I remember on one of these foraging excursions all that I could find—a mighty good find—to buy was onions. I bought a dozen and paid three dollars for them, the good woman pulling them up out of her garden, and knocking off the clinging earth. She gave me good measure, because I was so little and looked so wistful; she gave me two more than the bare dozen. It was more than a mile back to camp.

I was so hungry, nobody would know, I ate two of those onions, tops and all, without salt or bread, and though they brought tears to my eyes—not of penitence, however—I have never seen the Lynnhaven oyster that I enjoyed more.

Near Harrisonburg, sent out to get some country butter, I approached a plain, but cosy-looking home, and as I stepped down the walk, without any thought of my personal appearance, or of any impression I was making on the ladies within, except I *was* conscious—as what young man is not—of my first moustache, soft and downy; just as I reached the steps, out came a portly dame weighing about two hundred pounds, throwing her soft, very large arms around me, and pressing me to her shoulder, exclaiming, "Oh! my dear Henry, my dear boy!" There was a buxom lass of somewhat less avoirdupois standing on the sill, looking tenderly and awaiting her mother's performance. Had I not been so taken aback, I might have accepted the old lady's caresses in expectation of like sisterly salutations later; but I not only did not return the embraces so ardently given, but cried out and disengaged myself with all speed. It may interest you to know, however, I got the butter—both cow and apple-butter.

At Charlestown I had the good fortune to meet a young lady whom I had known at Hampden-Sidney, and at the exceedingly opportune time of breakfast. An invitation to enter and partake was gladly accepted. I had unfortunately had my jacket, which I used as a pillow at night, stolen; but I fortunately was supplied with a good, fresh, blue, Yankee overcoat generously supplied by our quartermaster, General Banks. This served in all the capacities to which a soldier put a coat, except as top coat. My host, the brother-in-law of the kind friend whose invitation I had accepted, asked me to hang up my hat and coat

in the hall, and walk into the parlor, awaiting breakfast. My hat I hung up, but for obvious reasons my coat I did not. It was early, shortly after sunrise; a fresh, pleasant May morning, delicious in the outer air. My good friend, Rev. Dr. D——, a distinguished Presbyterian divine, asked me if I was cold; I said, No. The truth is, I had forgotten my Yankee overcoat was anything but a dress-coat for evening wear. Breakfast was announced; still I did not lay aside my overcoat. There was real coffee, and an elegant breakfast elegantly served. My seat was near the stove; a whispered command was given the servant, and with the hot coffee, the advancing mild May morning, and a roaring hot fire kindled for my comfort, and my heavy overcoat, perspiration trickled down my face, and down to my shoes, and I was in a stew if not a torrent; and it was not until good Dr. D—— began to kindle a fire in the parlor to warm his wintry-clad guest that I implored him to desist and explained; but I enjoyed my breakfast!

Glorious Winchester! Noble men, nobler women! Can I ever forget the defeat of Banks, Sunday, the 25th of May, 1862? Can I ever forget that rattling ride through Winchester on a caisson, our horses in full gallop, and lumbering like a steam fire-engine to a fire? Old men and maidens and little children were on the street waving and hurrahing, with tears and smiles, welcoming the victorious army of General Jackson. This was the glory of the warrior. What a magnificent chase that was! How exhilarating! How intoxicating the shout of victory! This was both magnificent and it was war! Six miles beyond Winchester, in sweeping double-quick, the wreck of defeat strewing the way, until in sheer exhaustion the men were halted and rested under trees by the Martinsburg turnpike. After perhaps half an hour or an

hour there rose a shout, a clatter of hoofs, and we saw a horseman, at full speed, galloping along the lines; his head bare and bald, with dark, piercing eye and hooked nose, ugly, but oh! so splendid; the infantry along the road shouting and hurrahing. Who is it? It is my first sight of the brave General Ewell. His staff follows rapidly. We were among his men as our battery stood by the roadside awaiting orders. Presently another shout rent the air, louder, wilder than before. Every prostrate, resting soldier rose and ran to the roadside. Yonder, in a faded gray coat, on Old Sorrel, came Stonewall himself, his cap in hand, his eye bright with victory, his hair fluttering in the wind, the very cyclone of battle, followed by his panting staff. Talk of ovations! they were ovations indeed. I never knew whether this triumphal ride was designed or unintentional; but certainly the rank and file of the army were intensely animated by the sight of their heroic and victorious chieftains, and it added to the joy of victory to those who had won so gloriously.

We pressed on even to Bolivar Heights; and then began that masterly retreat by which the General of the Swift Foot, as an old Indian in Massanuttin Mountain called him, eluded Banks and Milroy at Strasburg, defeated Fremont and Shields successively at Port Republic, swept down like a storm upon McClellan's flank, and uncovered Richmond. I do not forget that it was General Lee's plan, his generalship, his strategy; but it was Stonewall's execution—swift, terrible, successful.

During the seven days' fight around Richmond I was spared the danger of battle, being on detailed duty at Ashland, in the signal service. I returned, however, to a more active campaign later in the summer; was transferred back again to the Rockbridge Artillery, its ranks having been depleted by promotion and death. I was in

the engagements of Cedar Run, Second Manassas, on Hill Chantilly, crossed into Maryland in the first Maryland campaign; and the last action in which I was engaged as a private soldier was Sharpsburg, called in the schoolbooks and histories Antietam. In this battle our battery was for a part of the time under the immediate command of the cannoneer whom General Lee called the "gallant Pelham," and our line was commanded on the extreme left by General J. E. B. Stuart, him of the merry song and raven plume. It was General Stuart who took our men when not engaged in firing, and giving each a battle flag, stationed them in a dense field of corn, the colors waving high in air, at the distance of regimental colors apart, to represent a line of infantry concealed in the splendid standing corn. It was in this action that I was nearest personal danger. We had been posted to engage the enemy, and draw their fire, the purpose being to conceal the movements of infantry and divert the galling artillery fire from them to us. We succeeded capitally in this, for soon shot and shell were flying thick about us; seven horses out of twenty-four in our section were killed, and several men wounded. I was leaning with my left elbow behind the saddle of one of the horses, looking at the battery whose fire we had attracted. I saw a gun belch out its load, and it was not long before I saw the ball, solid shot, like a swift base-ball, coming right towards me. I knew it was aligned right to strike me, but did not know whether it would fall short or go over us; but in the awful moment of fear, I sprang as far as I could to the right, and fell to the ground, crying out for my father. The shot struck the horse just about where I was leaning, tore him in two, and I suppose caught the outer edge of my coat-tail, which was torn off. I was buried in the blood of the expiring and struggling horse. I heard Cap-

tain Poague say, "There, Lacy's gone," and kind friends rushed to pull me away, and I was only badly frightened, messed up with blood, and minus one coat-flap. My coat after that became a jacket.

I was also at the siege and capture of Harper's Ferry, just preceding the fight at Sharpsburg, when the garrison of eleven thousand men, well dressed and equipped, surrendered to the ragged regiments of Lee. I was at the Hot Springs of Virginia in the summer of 1866 or 1867, and there met with a Federal colonel of volunteers from Hillsboro, Ohio. I forget his name, but I think it was Miles; and when we were comparing notes of the war, he said that never in his life had he felt so humiliated as when, in brilliant and unsoiled uniform, he and his regiment, so amply fitted out, stacked arms and filed behind a line of begrimed, sallow, half-equipped men. "Thank you," said I; "Colonel, I was not there, being in artillery service; but I was thereabouts, and saw the prisoners of war."

After Sharpsburg, the arduousness of the campaign, the incessant exposure, the three times wading the Potomac, waist or breast deep, and sleeping in wet clothes, brought on rheumatism and lumbago. I was sent back to Staunton, then to Farmville; thence I was detailed for duty at Camp Lee to act as chaplain and assistant to Rev. Dr. Hoge; and after other details of similar duty, I was commissioned as chaplain of the Forty-seventh North Carolina Regiment, State Troops, many in the command being from my native town of Raleigh, and commanded by my father's friend and my own, Colonel Sion H. Rogers, who had represented the Raleigh District in Congress, and whose wife was the daughter of United States Senator Haywood, of North Carolina.

I intended to say something, when I began these remi-

niscences, of that life as a chaplain; but I have detained you long enough with the rambling story of my experience as a private. It is one of the compensations of the constitution of our minds that time softens asperities and memory recalls the pleasant and sunny spots of life's eventful pilgrimage. When we stand on a mountain peak we see only the knolls and peaks kissed by the sun, the dark ravines and dells not illumined by his rays we see not. So in looking back over army life one recalls with pleasure the rough and arduous service. When two old soldiers talk, it is not of fresh and ghastly wounds, not of hunger and torture and cold, not of fear and peril; but it is of dangers past, of privations sturdily borne, of victories and glorious courage. So it is that incidents not heroic at all, even trivial and foolish, interest us, the pleasantries even of stern and cruel war.

I was told this story by a surgeon, at which one scarcely knows whether to laugh or to cry, for there is mimic tragedy and comedy in almost every scene of life. A soldier in the regiment, a man of humble life, whose feelings found expression in music, carried with him as long as he could a violin, on which, not without a certain rude skill and pathos, he played and found comfort. To him it was pipe, dog, companion, everything. He was in the fortunes of battle wounded in his left hand. It was a problem of surgery to save it; but it was saved, only it was necessary to remove the fourth finger, the one next to the little finger. The brave, uncomplaining soldier broke into tears when told he must lose this finger, and begged to spare it; but the exigency was such it must be amputated. "Oh! it's nothing much," said the doctor after the work was done; "you are not much maimed; your right hand is good, and your left is only a little crippled. "Oh! Doctor," said the man, as he wailed and wept, "you don't

know how I love that finger; you don't know how I love my old fiddle; that's the onliest finger I've got to play my bass string and my high notes; oh! Doctor, I can't ever play my old fiddle no more."

The cuisine of camp life is now matter of pleasant recollection. It was then a bitter and most unwelcome experience. Nassau meat, half rations, or quarter rations much of the time; in the morning, with camp-made biscuit, without soda, grease or salt, and coffee made of corn-meal burnt black, and without sugar, that was morning menu, and if we had any left, it was warmed over for the evening for the second meal. We never indulged in the useless luxury of three meals a day! Sometimes we made a glorious dish of cush, frying out all the grease of the fat bacon, adding as much water in the frying-pan, and placing therein our hardtack, broken, and often it must be broken by stones, until the mixture becomes the consistency of mush. When near Petersburg—I was then a chaplain—a kind friend sent our mess a little bag or pot of peas. What a royal dinner we were going to have! Experts by experience in the culinary art, no difficulty was apprehended in so simple a thing as cooking peas. We filled our little tin boiler nearly full, poured water to the brim, and set thereon a piece of bacon as big as a silver dollar to season the pot, as it was put on to boil or simmer. Without the scientific acumen of James Watt, we watched the lid rise, then noted a gentle commotion as the peas began to swell and jostle one another and the bacon out of the boiler. We removed some to this plate, added water, presently had to remove some more peas to another plate, then filled our two tin coffee cups, and then, like the woman in the scriptures, had to borrow vessels not a few, until peas, peas, peas were on bed, shelf, stool, on everything on which anything could be set in our little

tent. We learned the lesson not to attempt to cook a pot full of peas at once.

On another occasion—this also occurred while I was a chaplain—there came to the army a visiting minister to preach to the troops in winterquarters, and to visit his parishioners who were in the field. He was a man very tall, very angular, with long arms, long limbs, long feet, and, as is not to be wondered at, he was withal very awkward. He was devout, reverent, saintly, one of whom the world was not worthy. He had a way, as some ministers have, of shutting his eyes when he prayed, yet in such a way as to show the whites of his eyes. His friends were delighted to see him, and wished to do him all honor, and to spread for his refreshment the best the camp afforded. In the regiment he visited, many of them Scotch Presbyterians, as he was, he was to take tea—so called in euphuism—before service in camp that night. The hospitalities of these true men were tested. A neat plank, how obtained this deponent saith not, somewhat warped, and resting on uneven ground, constituted the table. Some biscuits, some home-cured bacon with loyal gravy, and some corn-meal coffee constituted the bill of fare. So eventful and so unusual a meal, with such a guest, demanded devout recognition. The minister was called on to "ask a blessing." He rose to his great height, closed his eyes, but, alas! by an awkward movement of his long, protruding foot, he tilted the plank and turned over the gravy! which catastrophe one of the party, less reverent, observing, he touched the praying man, exclaiming with a great deal of angry earnestness and faulty grammar, "You needn't ask no blessing now; you've done turned over the gravy!"

Do not think, from these stories of something to eat, or of battles and marches, that such thoughts only filled our

lives. There were times of sweet spiritual refreshment. There were seasons of serious reflection. What solemn and searching thoughts would sweep over a man—often grave and sad—as he would wrap himself in his blanket and look up at the stars keeping watch above him; thoughts of the infinitude of space, and the majesty of the Maker of those tireless, distant orbs; thoughts of duty, life, danger, eternity; thoughts of home, love, happiness, the dear ones whose prayers followed them every step of the march, every moment of the peril! I remember, after the battle of Second Manassas, a drenching rain drove some of us to find comfort under the harsh protection of a caisson cover. Utterly wretched, as each one felt in wet clothes, and with the usual reaction after intense excitement, when one would almost as soon be dead as living, I was surprised and rebuked when I heard one of the purest and noblest of our men—a mere boy, modest and fair—say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

Once when in camp near Gordonsville a letter, which I now know to have been a cruel hoax—a method adopted by thoughtless friends to have me come home—told me of a serious and probably fatal accident befalling my father, and his desire to see me, and urging me, if I wished ever to see him again, to come at once. I took the letter at once to Colonel Taliaferro, commanding the Third Brigade, who, without approving my application for furlough, allowed me to go to the next in command, who was none other than General Taliaferro, of Gloucester, who in like manner allowed me to see General Jackson, whom I knew, and whose personal kindness to me encouraged me to ask him. I gave him the letter that was the basis of my earnest plea. He read it, then took me

out from the home where he had made his headquarters, and when alone spoke to me in substance, "This is a sore trial for you. I am under orders; I cannot let you go. You are a soldier, a Christian, a minister of the gospel. Now is the time to test your faith and character. Be patient and do your duty." Let me say that though my father had been hurt seriously, it was not dangerously, and he soon recovered.

Had I time, I might tell you of many precious seasons of religious quickening. Although many of General Jackson's battles were fought on Sunday, he often observed Monday in such cases as a day of rest and thanksgiving for victory. I have heard him pray in the presence of his men, and his prayers were like his battles, short, earnest, effectual. I have often seen him with uplifted hand while the battle raged. I have often, too, seen General Lee in devout attendance upon public worship; and once, by accident, I happened to be near his camp-fire when he and General Pendleton, and some others whom I do not recall or know, were kneeling in prayer.

This happened in my experience as chaplain: Early in May, when the campaign of 1864 had opened, and the bloody battles of Spotsylvania had been fought, General Grant having begun his famous flank movement which brought him nearer Richmond week by week. I was sent for to hold service on the lines, my post being with the field hospital, in the rear. We were allowed no lights, so that I had to read my scriptures from memory, and line out the hymns in the same manner. We had sung "Come Thou Fount" to Nettleton; oh! what royal singing hundreds of men's voices, though in the open air, gave! I do not remember the second hymn—I think it was "There is a Fountain." Remember, that was before the days of Moody and Sankey and Gospel Hymns. I remember giv-

ing out as the last hymn the one hundredth Psalm, "Before Jehovah's awful throne." We sang all the verses, and then closed with the doxology, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," to the same tune, Old Hundred. As the voices swelled and rolled heavenward, with rich volume, like soft thunder, lo! in the distance we could hear the echo—or, was it the echo? As the men hushed with expectancy, waiting for the benediction, we heard from the camp of the enemy the same magnificent and matchless melody. Captain Lankford, commanding our regiment, said, "Chaplain, let us join in," and again from that dark recess behind temporary earthworks, our men took up the grand refrain, and Northern and Southern soldier joined in singing—as has been done many a day since—

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

REWARD OF THE USEFUL TEACHER.

AN ORDINATION SERMON.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."—DANIEL xii. 3.

WHEN the great German astronomer, Kepler, whose name (not perhaps so familiar to us as the English names of Newton and Herschel) is known wherever the red light of Mars shines, first made those grand discoveries that have linked his name with the stars, was asked by his sovereign what honorary award should be given for his distinguished services to the cause of science, he answered, "I need no princely gift; my reward is in my work; whoever studies the stars will read my name, and my glory is written in their light." When remonstrated with because of his devotion to the science, he replied, "Ye know not how dear those twinkling orbs are to me. I love them. The stars are the handwriting of God; I love to read what he has written. Who can behold them without devout admiration of him who made them? and what a language they speak to us of majesty, of glory, of unceasing service, of undying duty and undying fame!"

Surely the renowned philosopher is right. Who can behold the starry heavens on some night in midwinter without a thrill of adoring wonder. Beauty sparkles in the blue depths; infinitude oppresses the soul; the noiseless and majestic march of that host whom no man can number, officered and led by the unseen King of glory,

across the measureless field of space, fills the reflecting mind with an unutterable, yet delightful awe.

> What tho' in solemn silence, all
> Move round this dark, terrestrial ball?
> What tho' no real voice nor sound
> Amidst those radiant orbs be found?
> In reason's ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a glorious voice,
> Forever singing as they shine,
> The hand that made us is divine.

And these splendid objects, the most splendid that glitter and that gladden and glorify this world in which we live, are the divinely chosen symbols, the inspired device to portray the splendor of those that lead souls to Christ.

One of the grandest principles of our nature is ambition. I do not mean an unworthy or an unholy ambition; but a noble aspiration leads to noble endeavor, and a sanctified ambition leads to the highest grade of Christian usefulness. It is not the mere and mean desire to excel others; not the longing to shine so as to attract fulsome praise, the public gaze and applause, the shout of the street, or the chief seats in the synagogue. It is not connected with the opinions of men of fickle populaces that shout "Hosanna" one day and "Crucify him" the next. The fear of man bringeth a snare; but it is that principle —that motive—that desires and longs to be all things for Christ, that wishes for and seeks after all that may make one most useful, most lovely, most holy, most Christlike. The thought of personal repute enters not into such an ambition. The fireman thinks not of his personal appearance, as plunging through the blinding smoke and fierce heat he rescues the helpless babe; and yet he never made so grand a picture as, standing on the tottering wall against the black sky, lighted by the lurid, leaping flame,

he bears the little one down the fireman's ladder to a place of safety.

To this principle of our nature is the appeal often made in the scripture, stimulating to the performance of duty. The glory, the satisfaction, the certainty, the eternity of the reward; these and like ideas are revealed to encourage, to entice, to establish us in the path of right and honor. Fame, however, is but the accident of service, the shadow that proves the sunlight. He who works for fame, for fame's sake, pursues a shadow as fleeting and empty as airy nothing. He who does his duty walks in the sunshine of divine favor, and the shadow inevitably follows. It is only when men turn their backs upon the sun, upon their duty and their God, that they see their own shadow. He who faces his duty may know that there is a shadow, but he cares naught for it.

How fleeting and vain it is let the record of decayed civilizations and dead empires teach us. The great Rameses, the Pharaoh at whose nod the civilized word trembled, lies a shrivelled mummy, a few lines in the book of books, a few words on the vestments that wrapped his clay, and that is all! How like a meteor blazed the great Napoleon, the bright track of its erratic course a moment seen, then the blackness of unrelieved darkness! How ephemeral the fame that letters, conquests, or titles confer! Take the soldier, seeking the bubble reputation even at the cannon's mouth; valor, skill, wisdom, well-directed daring and success are his; yet as short as is the red light of the belching gun, a flash and then darkness, as short as the momentary rattle of a thousand muskets—a roar and then groans, silence and random shots; as short as the glittering sheen of a line of silver spears; so short and evanescent his fame. Of the hundreds of thousands of brave men who fell when Joshua led the armies of the Lord we

know not the name of one. Of the myriads who followed the eagles of Cæsar and whose bones bleached in sunny Gallia, fame, once so blatant, speaks not. Yea, on fated Waterloo, where English, Irish and Scotch, under Wellesley's banner, fell, and where the field is yet green, enriched by the noblest blood of time, we know not of one in a thousand. Yea, nearer still, though in many homes is cherished the memory of the unreturning dead, and though scarce a score of years has passed since the first battle of the war, there is not a field of carnage but where the unknown outnumber all.

To be linked with the stars, as Kepler in his earthly fame, to be likened to those brilliant orbs, ceaseless, pure, untiring, perpetual and splendid, each in his own light, this is true fame, because a fame which God gives—eternal as his nature; and such is the reward which the prophet says belongs to those who teach wisely and successfully; for this passage evidently refers to the awards of the last grand assizes. In no other way can we so rationally interpret the preceding verse, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." It is in further development of the revelations of the last day and of eternity that it continues, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Observe the Hebraic parallelisms which are amplificative and explanatory. "They that be wise" is developed in the second verse of the Hebrew poetry as "they that turn to righteousness," enlarged, made grand by insertion of "many;" and the general glory of the spangled, illumined heavens, as in the first clause, is explained and vastly augmented by the individual splendors of special orbs, the stars out of the multitude that fasten

the eye because of their majesty and lustre, and that gleam forever, not like the stars that are to fall like leaves in autumn, but endure through eternity.

A further word of exposition is becoming in explication of the word *wise*. The margin renders it teachers, and the distinct allusion is to the thirty-third verse of the preceding chapter. They that understand among the people shall instruct many; and the idea is, they that teach wisely shall shine as the general glory of the starry skies, they that teach successfully as the splendid stars, and forever.

The theme for our contemplation as taught us by this passage is: *The reward of the useful teacher of souls.*

Before considering this, however, there are preliminary observations suggested by the words of the text which I wish to present, and which are worthy of our consideration.

1. And *first,* the teacher of souls must be wise. He must be wary to win. He must lie in wait. He must watch for souls. His object is to win, and all that is needed to secure this grand object is to be known. Prudence, caution, patience, courage, kindness, all summed up in wisdom. It is the story of one of our greatest Carolinians, to whose brigade I belonged, the gallant and accomplished Pettigrew, whose assiduous studies in the art of war won from his comrades many a jest as his distinguished courage won their devotion, that when asked why he was so devoted to his books, he answered, "I am fighting to win, not for the fun of it, or the glory of it, but to gain my cause; I must study how." So the soldier of the cross is fighting to win; he must study how.

How this inculcates that wise consideration of temperament and circumstance! How often irretrievable error, fatal blunder is committed through the mistaken kindness, the imprudence, the incaution of Christian ministers and friends.

2. Another thing taught us, it seems to me, is that it is a wise thing to be a teacher. He that winneth souls is wise.

Again, he must be wise in experience of God's grace, and in knowledge of God's will. The priest's lips should keep knowledge, is the inspired teaching. The people should seek the law at his mouth. He must be competent to instruct; not a novice, but apt to teach.

And does not this mean more than I have just developed, that he must be wise, and act wisely, who winneth souls, or taketh them, as the margin teaches us? Does it not mean that it is the part of wisdom to devote one's life to winning souls? Not only, then, must the teacher be wise, but he is wise who becomes a teacher, when he considers his own soul and its spiritual growth in consequence. Why is it that as a general rule (there are sad exceptions) that ministers are most holy and consecrated men? Is it not because they give themselves so wholly to spiritual studies, and live in an atmosphere favorable for spiritual growth? They are wise when we consider the worth of souls, the magnitude and importance of the work, the nature of it, the blessedness of it, the rewards of it.

A young man once came to Mr. Spurgeon's Pastor's College, with the desire to study for the ministry. His promise and his talents were known to the great preacher, and he rejoiced at his decision; yet he asked him, "Have you considered this carefully, its sacrifice, its service, its self-denial and poverty?" "Yes," he said, "I have looked at the question all around. It seems to me in this way I can best serve my Master, and I want to preach the gospel." Mr. Spurgeon answered with emotion and emphasis, "Young man, you have made a wise choice, a choice that the Lord Jesus approves; you could not do a wiser

thing, because you could not do a better thing than preach the gospel."

3. A third thing taught us in this beautiful and expressive parallelism is that the great wisdom of teaching is in turning souls to righteousness, in turning many souls to righteousness; that is, in leading sinners to Christ, to accept him and his righteousness, and thus accomplish a personal righteousness. True teaching, useful preaching is not in learned tropes and brilliant metaphors, not in science and metaphysics, not in self-display or pedantry; no, no, but in Jesus.

Look at the papers of to-day, at the themes that fill our pulpits. How many of them are merely literary essays; how many are scientific discussions; how many political disquisitions. I believe in preaching to suit the times in a good sense, on timely themes and so as to catch the ear, in order to tell the old, old story. A recent New York paper had a sermon from a most distinguished minister entitled "Guiteauism," another "Ingersollism," another "The Lessons of the Jeannette." Do you wonder that such preaching drives the thinking to skepticism and the ignorant to Catholicism?

No, no. Let us remember that the aim of the preaching, the aim of the church, must be to lead souls to Christ, to win them for him. A party of lawyers was once discussing the elements of successful practice. "I have found it," said Mr. Badger, one of the men, whose name adorns our State, "the part of eminent wisdom to be well prepared in the case, and by all means to carry the jury." That is the minister's high mission, by all means always to carry the jury—so to preach, to teach as to turn, yea, to turn many to righteousness.

Now let us contemplate the reward.

1. And first I remark it is a glorious reward. Is there

aught in nature more splendid than a glittering star? It is in all ages and in all lands the emblem and ensign of distinction and renown. The diadem of the noble, the crown of the sovereign gleam with this significant symbol. Every nation has some rank of authority and honor expressed with a star. It is the universally recognized badge of glory. Why is this? Not merely because of its intrinsic beauty, but because it glitters in the sky the symbol of unattainable majesty and splendor. The child cries for it, the maiden sighs for it, and wears in mock imitation of its inimitable radiance the device of the lapidary; the monarch desires it, and adorns his coronet with man's array of costly jewels in starry effulgence.

Look once more at the spangled heavens.

> "Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patives of bright gold!
> There's not the smallest orb that thou beholdest
> But in his motion like an angel sings."

The glittering brilliancy of those unceasing fires, the innumerable company of bright inhabitants of heaven's blue field, the mysterious stillness and precision of those marshalled ranks, the varying splendors of the skies—can there be aught in nature and to the eye of sense that can more beautifully symbolize the unfading and radiant glory of those that turn many to righteousness? Whether we consider the planets that burn with steady flame, reflecting the light of their central orb and power (and what a striking emblem this of Christian character and usefulness), or the stars themselves, those distant suns of other systems, the illustration is beautiful and impressive. The light shines; light itself is glorious—to use Plato's fine thought, "God's glorious shadow."

The reward of the soul-winner is glorious. The soul redeemed is brought from darkness to light. It adds

lustre to the name and work of Jesus. He that wins souls is a co-worker with the King, for he came to seek and save the lost. To stand by his side is honor, to work with him and for him is glory. To fill heaven with joy, to wake the harps of gold with a new triumph of grace, this is the soul-winner's reward.

2. This reward is justly given. It is the guerdon of the King. He bestows royal reward. The apostles sit on the twelve thrones. The saints are to judge the world; they are to rule the earth. They share the seat of power with the Sovereign. Such is his princely favor.

As the star shines because the hand that fashioned it lit its undying torch, as the star shines, not by its own effort, but of its nature, as the star shines according to the lustre its Maker bestowed, so is it with those who shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. The reward is God-given, the measure of light is God-given, as one star differeth from another star in glory; and he apportions the service, and the result—*proportion.*

3. And this reward is eternal. There is a time when the sun shall grow dim with age. It shall be turned into darkness. That field, sown thick with stars, shall lose its gleaming gems; but they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars, but for ever and ever! Here is undying fame; Here is true renown, because it is everlasting. We speak of "fame's eternal camping ground." Here is a lustre that outshines and outlasts the sun—a fame satisfying, luminous, enduring.

The laurel-wreath, the chaplet of oak leaves and bay, charms by its beauty, yet saddens by its evanescence. It is but a fading flower, a dying, withering leaf, the symbol not only of applause, but of change. In itself considered, it is naught, less than nothing and vanity! But the star,

the reward of the soul-winner, is no evanescent gleam, as a bubble rising in the sunlight and bursting, but it is an enduring flame lit by the hand of God, ravishing by its own intrinsic glory and satisfying the noblest longings of the most exalted spirits. This is a reward that has in it none of the elements of dissolution or decay. It is not based on human approval, but divine, and hence unchanging. It is not based on an ephemeral effort, a work that flashes and fades, but on an enduring result. As long as the saved soul endures the trophy of redeeming grace, so long does the glorious reward of the wise teacher continue. It is not based on a single act, but on a nature, the act being but the fruitage of the disposition; and hence the monument is as eternal as the undying nature of man redeemed by infinite love.

Does such a reward enchant you? I shall have spoken in vain to-day if I have not quickened in you some desire to be wise, to turn many to righteousness, to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever!

Let me bring this matter home to you, my friends. We meet to-day in annual review of the work of another year, a year that has past and taken to God its account of our unfaithfulness, our unfruitfulness, our shortcoming. Let us remember that the first aim of the church, the first duty of the church, is to win souls, to turn sinners to righteousness. To this must every energy be directed, for this must we exercise wisdom, forethought and prudence. It is all very well to have comfortable churches, furnished and fitted; to have Sunday-schools and missionary meetings, and libraries, and preaching; but these are means, merely means to the one end, the grand purpose of saving souls, of reclaiming the wandering, confirming the weak and wavering, comforting the sorrowing, and bringing to the

knowledge of the truth the thoughtless and unconverted. As an end the church may encourage education, control Christian institutions, print Bibles and good books, inculcate moral reforms, and all that; but its high and heaven-born mission is to save souls.

My friends, let this be our effort for this year on which we enter. Let us mark this year by our endeavors to win souls. Oh! how we have been admonished; how short the time is! Our opportunities are yet continued, but for how long? Let the hearts of the fathers turn to the children, of the children to the fathers. Ye mothers, lead your little ones to Jesus, by your life, by your words, by your prayers. Have you ever sought to do so? Ye teachers in the Sunday-school, what a reward is yours if you win your class to the Saviour, and what a delightful and blessed work is that in which you are engaged—a work that angels would rejoice to be allowed to perform! Are there not those who long to engage in this or in some work for Jesus? If the superintendent can give you no class, do like Mr. Moody in Chicago, gather up a class yourself and bring them here. Verily you shall not lose your reward.

Oh! that my words may reach some youth, and lead to the consideration of the question of a call to the gospel ministry. Say not "There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest." The fields are white to-day. It is your duty to serve God in the way you can do the most good; in the ministry, if in that way you can win more souls for Christ. That is to be the question. Have you thought of it, and will you not consider God's claims first? I do not say that every one ought to preach; that you ought, God's word lays down some restrictions, and so does his providence; but I do say that every Christian man must face the question, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, and that involves a decision of the question, Am I

called to preach? Do not shove it aside till a more convenient season; duty is always imperative; and remember the glorious reward!

You remember the story of the dying maiden, whose pure and peaceful life promised a happy end, and her simple faith linked her to an almighty Saviour; how she wept and mourned. "Oh!" said her faithful pastor, "can you not trust the Saviour, who will not leave you now?" "I trust him wholly," she answered; "but life is gone now, and I have done nothing for him, and in heaven I shall have but a starless crown."

When Dr. Lyman Beecher was on his death-bed, some brethren asked him as to the result of a long, laborious and useful life, "You have had wide experience; you know a great deal; what was the greatest of all things?" "It is not theology, it is not controversy; it is to save souls."

AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST.

AN INSTALLATION SERMON.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us."—2 CORINTHIANS v. 20.

IN the solemn and interesting event that convenes us this day it has seemed to me not inappropriate that I should direct your thought to some aspects of the gospel ministry, and the corresponding duties of minister and people, suggested by the phase of truth in the statement of the apostle chosen as our theme of meditation.

The apostle wrote these words to the church at Corinth, the church that had occasioned him so much concern, to which he had already written one letter filled with sharp and merited reproof, and had sent Titus, charged with messages of solemn warning and instruction. This epistle reveals Paul's inner nature, perhaps, more than any other. The warm feelings and sincere affection cherished for the repentant members, his gratitude for their reforms, his earnest desire to be still cherished and loved by them, notwithstanding his just censures before delivered, are strangely and abruptly mingled with severe and indignant rebuke of those who still disregarded his faithful warnings, and his earnest denunciation of their false guides. In the context he is defending his ardent devotion, which some had reprehended. Dr. Hodge thus epitomizes: "He declares that he acted under a solemn sense of his responsibility to God (verse 11). This was not said with a view of commending himself, but rather to afford them the means of vindicating his character (verse 12).

Whether his way of speaking of himself was extravagant or moderate, sane or insane, his motive in doing as he did was a sincere regard to the glory of God and the good of his church (verse 13). For the love of Christ constrained him to live, not for himself, but for him who died for him and rose again (verse 14, 15). Acting under the control of this elevated principle, he was raised above the influence of external things. He did not judge of men by their external condition. He was a new creature in virtue of his union with Christ (verses 16, 17). This great change which he had experienced was not self-wrought; it was of God, who was the author of the whole scheme of redemption. He is reconciled unto the world through Jesus Christ, and he has commissioned his ministers to proclaim this great truth to all men (verses 18, 19). Therefore the apostle, as an ambassador of God, exhorted men to accept of this offer of reconciliation, for which the most abundant provision had been made, in that God had made Christ to be sin for us, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (verses 20, 21)."

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. If, as is done in our version, and is usually understood, these clauses are connected, they are explanatory of each other. God beseeches through his ambassadors, for the Father and the Son are both deeply and equally concerned in the salvation of sinners; and the proof that the apostle or the minister is an ambassador in the name of Christ is seen in that God beseeches through him. It seems, however, more natural to divide the clauses as some have done: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ: as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

The apostle by the Holy Spirit makes use of this strik-

ing metaphor to portray his own relation to the Corinthian Christians. God has provided a great redemption; the scheme is complete. In Christ he is reconciled, and to earthen vessels hath he committed the ministry of reconciliation. They must promulge to the world the tidings of peace; they must persuade men to be reconciled. Thus commissioned, the apostle declares himself an ambassador, an accredited messenger and representative.

This ministry of reconciliation is still committed to us, and those who are called to the sacred office of the gospel ministry are still ambassadors for Christ. The minister is a herald. He declares his Master's message. He bears his Master's credentials and livery, and his word is the word of his Sovereign. Not to hear that word is to refuse to hear the King himself; but he is not only a herald, but a legate. He not only bore the terms and promulged the edict, but he likewise represented the dignity of his Sovereign; so that the simile of the apostle is apt and rich. The ambassador from one court to another is not merely a messenger, bearing fraternal messages, terms of amity and reconciliation, but a representative of the monarch whose credentials he bears and the country from which he comes. This high and impressive title is given to the humblest servant of God, called to take part in the ministry of reconciliation. He is an ambassador for Christ.

Let us learn the lessons indicated to us in the use of this title. The minister of Jesus Christ is an ambassador:

1. Because of his divine appointment. No man, however distinguished by rank or service, however great his merit or renown, would venture to assume to represent this nation at any foreign court without duly commissioned authority. It is an insult to the majesty of the realm—an insult both to the foreign power and the home government. Whatever claims or qualifications such an

one may have, without the warrant and seal of his government, he cannot be an ambassador.

Just so is it with the ministry of reconciliation. "No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." (Hebrews v. 4.) God as the Sovereign reserves to himself the high prerogative of commissioning his ambassadors. In *a priori* theory we would so judge, and in history we find it true. In the patriarchal dispensation, as represented by Abraham, the head of the family was priest in his household; and in the Levitical dispensation Aaron and the sons of Levi were expressly set apart for the priestly office. "Take thou unto thee," said the Lord to Moses, "Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." (Exodus xxviii. 1.) And again, "This is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office;" then follow the prescribed ceremonies, "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash him with water; and thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod; and thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head, and anoint him." (Exodus xxix. 1, 4-7.) The sons of Levi were also solemnly set apart. The complete investiture of these sacred officers was by authority of God himself.

So likewise when in later times he spoke by the mouth of his prophets, Samuel he called—and how often is it written by those holy seers, "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying." How often is the solemn and signifi-

cant record made, "Son of man, go unto the house of Israel, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord"!

So too did the Saviour call Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom, and the sons of Zebedee, with Peter and Andrew, mending their nets, did he call to be fishers of men; and the Apostle Paul too was divinely called by the voice that said, "I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles" (Acts xiii. 47), and "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts ix. 15).

So too do we now inculcate the necessity of a divine call, that the man of God, to be clothed with this august commission, must be called (not inspired), as evidenced by the inward moving of the Spirit and the outward call of the church.

Everywhere do we see this solemn truth confirmed, that the minister is an ambassador duly commissioned. Pastors and teachers are among the ascension gifts of Christ. Says Jeremiah (iii. 15), speaking the word of God to backsliding Israel, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

It is further shown by the fact that the Lord puts the message in their mouth: "For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts" (Malachi ii. 7). "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature" (Mark xvi. 15). "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew xxviii. 19, 20).

Every honest man will pause before entering so sacred an office without some token, some evidence, that he is

chosen to this great work. I do not say that all who profess to be ministers, or even have some sanction of the church, are divinely called. Alas!

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

But in our church the greatest scrutiny and care are taken to discover not only native fitness and suitable intellectual culture, but sincere piety and earnest desire to glorify God in the ministry. No one of sensibility, no heart that is truly moved by divine grace, can assume to be an ambassador. It is one of the most awful and solemn steps in a man's life when he decides to devote himself to the ministry. Nothing but a stern sense of duty, at times painful and overwhelming, that impels him. Like Paul, he is constrained to exclaim, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel."

2. In this title we see the *honor* placed upon the gospel ministry. To be an ambassador for the court of heaven! A minister of Jesus our King, our thorn-crowned, nail-marked, triumphant King! It is an honor far surpassing any honors of earth. Stars, garters and ribbons, swords and diadems, titles and thrones are nothing compared with it. "I magnify mine office." The angel Gabriel would lay aside his harp, and on swift pinion descend to a world of woe, to be the bearer of the message of reconciliation; but no, God commissions earthen vessels, creatures of clay, feeble man to be his ambassador; oh! the goodness, the condescension, the wisdom of God!

Herein we see the honor, inasmuch as he is the representative of the court of heaven. The glory attaching to an earthly plenipotentiary is not so much the splendor and renown of the court to which he goes as of that from which he comes. He is the representative of his Sovereign and his country. His country's flag, her escutch-

eon, her power, her majesty attach to him as her representative. Though himself insignificant in resources or domain, abroad the nation's power is his.

Oh! sirs, think what it is to be the ambassador of Jesus—not merely the herald of his mercy, but the representative of his sovereignty. Well may we fall in the dust and say with pious and grateful David, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto."

This honor is seen further in the importance of the trust committed to the hands of the minister. He is charged with the highest, most solemn and most delicate duties. Those envoys of earthly potentates are certainly the most highly honored who are entrusted with the difficult and delicate tasks of adjustment and reconciliation. No more distinguished and honored representatives were ever sent forth from this country than the tried and renowned statesmen who adjusted the terms and signed the articles of peace between America and England in the Treaty of Paris, or more recently discharged the trust reposed at the Geneva Conference.

But the minister of the gospel bears the news of pardon to a rebel world, of salvation to a guilty race. He is commissioned to declare peace, hope, eternal life to those who accept the atonement of the King's Son. Did the heralds of the Imperial City deem it an honor to promulge with brazen trumpet, when the victorious armies of Pompey returned in triumph to the city, and the temple of Janus was closed, that peace dwelt upon the eternal city and wherever her eagles had glanced in the sun? and how much more should the herald of the cross regard it as the highest honor to declare the triumph of King Immanuel, the reign of an eternal peace, sealed with his blood? Into this great mystery do the angels, with astonished awe and

adoring wonder, desire to look. The glory of creation, when it burst upon their view, waked their songs of joy; but at this more stupendous revelation of the divine character, the great work of redemption through the blood of the Lamb, they are filled with unbounded amazement, as they swell their higher anthems of praise and triumph. This story denied them, God gives to man to tell, as he gives to man to sing, the new song they cannot sing.

This is the honor conferred on man—

> There stands the messenger of truth. There stands
> The legate of the skies. His theme divine,
> His office sacred, his credentials clear.
> By him the violated law speaks out
> Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
> As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.
> He establishes the strong, restores the weak,
> Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart;
> And, armed himself in panoply complete
> Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
> Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
> Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
> The sacramental host of God's elect.—*Cowper.*

3. But in the third place we learn by this title the responsibility of the sacred office.

As Christ's ambassador he must be such in person and character, in deportment and speech, as to bring no reproach upon his divine Master and his divine commission. The honor of his sovereign is in his keeping. Not that any inconsistency can spot the spotless character of the King, except in the eyes of a sinful and blinded world; but religion is never so sorely wounded as in the house of its friends, and never so deeply thrust as when a standard-bearer falls. Hence it is we find in the Levitical service, in the prophetical missions, in the tenor of the whole Scriptures, and especially of the pastoral epistles, holiness

of heart and life is so constantly demanded: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" (1 Tim. vi. 11, 12). "A bishop must be blameless" (1 Tim. iii. 2).

But also in the discharge of the important trusts committed to him as ambassador there is the gravest responsibility. He stands between the living and the dead. It is God's message that he delivers, and it is God's province to bless it; yet is the messenger filled with a mighty concern to speak that word solemnly, tenderly, earnestly, affectionately, "as well becomes the messenger of grace to guilty men." The solemn warnings to the idle shepherd, the derelict watchmen, fill his soul with dread. The weight of the care of souls oppresses him to the dust, overwhelms him with a sense of insufficiency; and then the multiform phases of duty that meet him, under circumstances and with issues so serious, so momentous, so delicate—to warn the rebellious, to instruct the ignorant, to uphold the faint, to guide the erring, to strengthen the feeble, to comfort the sorrowing, to sustain the dying, to feed the living—all bear upon him with crushing weight, till he is ready indeed to exclaim with Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. ii. 16.)

4. This leads me to point out as illustrated in this metaphor, the toils of the Christian minister.

The ambassador gives his first attention his highest concern to the interests of the Sovereign who commissions him and the government he represents. His private affairs are of no moment in the comparison, and he who for personal ends accepts and enters upon such responsible duties is unworthy of the high trust reposed in him. The faithful ambassador labors with painstaking assiduity to carry out his instructions to the letter, and especially

to secure the accomplishment of the particular mission assigned to him—the object of his commission. His constant endeavor is to maintain the rights unabridged, and the honor untarnished of the land whose banner he bears.

I need not say that the toils of the ambassador for Christ are arduous, onerous, constant and many. The bare, slight enumeration of the causes of his fear and weighty responsibility opened to our eyes some sense of the magnitude and extent of his labors. The duties of the closet, of the study, of the pulpit, and of the personal intercourse of minister and flock are augmented by the responsibilities that accompany them. The labor is aggravated by the incessant care. As God beseeches, so does he in Christ's stead.

The great example is the life of Christ. What constant watchfulness for opportunities to do good! what unwearying patience! what laborious wanderings! what severe privations! what assiduous and arduous toils in healing, preaching, and teaching by life, example, illustration and precept do we see in our divine Model! Is it beyond the power of mere man? Ah! true though that may be, still is he our divine Exemplar. He hath left us this example that we should follow his steps (1 Peter ii. 21). Towards this perfect pattern we are ever to strive to attain.

Look at the great apostle who wrote these words. What an illustrious example has he given us, in his own toilsome life and extended services, of patient fidelity, arduous labors and untiring zeal! Well may he recount his vicissitudes, and perils, and hardships, not in a spirit of vainglorious boasting, but to show that he was not a whit behind the chiefest of the apostles. The physical endurance, the mental anxiety, the spiritual travail that fell to him were such as now to strike us dumb with

amazement and fill our souls with loathing for our inefficiency. We need to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. We need to burn with consuming zeal. Oh! for the tongue of flame and the soul of fire—for Luther's majestic boldness, Melancthon's assiduous learning, Calvin's profound researches, Whitfield's burning fervor, Brainerd's holy self-sacrifice, Wesley's godly devotion! What a power would the church become, and how would slander and cavil stand abashed and cower and flee!

5. But such severe toils, such painful responsibilities could not be borne without sustaining strength. See then, in this designation of the minister's office, the supports and rewards that uphold him.

The ambassador of an earthly kingdom in the faithful discharge of his commission is upheld by the whole power of his realm. An insult to him is an insult to his sovereign. No man dare touch his person; he is invested with the majesty of his king, and armies and fleets hasten to avenge in blood indignities placed upon a nation's representative.

So too the faithful messenger of the cross, the ambassador of the King of grace, is upheld by the omnipotent support of his Sovereign. Time would fail me to indicate, much more to expand, this thought. How sweet the assurances, how rich and blessed the promises spoken by our King to sustain his weary and toiling messengers! What more precious word can he utter than this, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world"—even to the end of the age—as long as time endures. May God's ministers repose upon this parting promise of their ascended Lord!

"My grace shall be sufficient for thee." Arduous as are the labors, severe as are the self-denials, constant as

are the toils, incessant as are the responsibilities, the assurance is unequivocal—"as thy day thy strength shall be." The presence and sustaining grace of Jesus are pledged.

But there is also reward in the consciousness of duty done. No sphere of life calls for such an earnest inquiry as to the line of duty. The man who with a tender conscience and a sense of his deep unworthiness of so high an honor has sought the gospel ministry, with a due sense of its labors and trials and cares, has been impelled by the most overwhelming convictions of duty. No man can buckle on this armour lightly; and having once faced the question of duty and decided in the fear of God, however weak and unworthy he may see himself to be, there is a sense of ineffable calm, of holy peace and delight, in discharging the duty with that measure of strength which God gives.

Further, I remark, the service is one that is delightful in itself. Notwithstanding all its privations and deep dejections, its cares and its toils, it is the sweetest, the most delightful service in the world. No honor, no joy can compare with it. To preach the gospel, to tell the good news to dying men, to be the bearer of God's messages of mercy to the lost of earth—oh! friends, what can compare with this! Fade ye earthly crowns and pageants, vanish ye temporal dominions and thrones, perish every thrill of earthly glory and pleasure. Give me this blessed privilege of speaking of the King, of telling the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

It is the joy of the physician who sees the reward of his skill in the recovery of a loved patient. It is the joy of the teacher who notes the satisfactory progress of his pupils. It is the joy of the shepherd who rescues his helpless and timid fold from destruction and feeds and nour-

ishes them. It is the joy of the doting father who watches the graceful development of a loved child. It is the joy of the devoted and sorrowing mother who sees a wandering son reclaimed and restored. Aye, it is the joy of Jesus himself the minister shares, as he sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied (Isaiah liii. 11). Is there joy among the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth? and surely there is a greater joy among those who labor and who know what such a deliverance means.

Further, it is the solemn pleasure of this office that it is concerned about the highest revelations of God's character and the highest duties of man. To the minister's office pertains the most tender and holy duties, the most sacred and precious privileges. The comforter, the guide, the father, the bishop, the shepherd and friend of God's people, though great the solemn responsibility, equally desirable and attractive and precious are its labors and rewards. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him: let him know that he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins" (James v. 19, 20).

I have spoken only of the rewards here. Is this all? Aye, were it, it were enough to fire the ambition, to stimulate the earnest endeavor of every soldier of the cross; but may I venture to lift the veil, to gaze upon the unutterable glories that shall be revealed. Eternity alone will tell the fullness of your reward, oh! toiling ambassador of Jesus. Infinity alone will measure its blessedness. To stand in his matchless presence, to gaze upon the King in his beauty, to cast our crowns at his feet and worship and adore, this were enough; but to behold trophies of redeeming grace won by our endeavor, to see the Saviour's crown studded with gems which our instrumentality has

placed there would be glory overflowing. They say there are no tears in heaven; and I suppose there are none—none at least of pain or sorrow; but I cannot understand it. I suppose immortal strength will be given to endure the ineffable glory; but to look up at my King and say, Here am I, Lord, and those whom thou hast given me, would cause my voice to choke, my heart to burst, and my eyes to stream in torrents. The saintly Samuel Rutherfoord is beautifully represented as saying on his deathbed—

"The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

"Oh! Christ, he is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above.
There to an ocean fulness
His mercy does expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

"E'en Anworth was not heaven,
E'en preaching was not Christ;
And in my seabeat prison,
My Lord and I held tryst;
And aye my murkiest storm-cloud
Was by a rainbow spanned,
Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land.

"Fair Anworth by the Solway,
To me thou still art dear;
E'en from the verge of heaven,
I drop for thee a tear.

Oh! if one soul from Anworth
Meet me at God's right hand,
My heaven will be two heavens
In Immanuel's land."

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. xii. 3.)

I have now directed your attention to the office of the gospel ministry as represented under the type of an ambassador. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ. We have seen its divine authority, its august dignity, its grave responsibility, its severe service, and its precious and glorious rewards. I have not time to unfold the corresponding duties of those that receive this ambassador, or to take up his solemn message and beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Let me close with these two reflections—

1. We see God's wisdom and goodness in commissioning man to be his ambassador. The angels would have delighted to be thus commissioned; but God chooses the redeemed sinner who has tasted the peril and the peace to proclaim.

2. We learn the responsibility of hearing. The ambassador speaks the King's message: Be ye reconciled to God. He is to teach what is commanded, to preach the gospel. The people must hear him as God's ambassador, and his preaching as God's message.

THE CITY OF GOD.

A DEDICATION SERMON.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following."—PSALM xlviii. 12, 13.

THIS is a triumphal Psalm, composed after marked deliverance from threatened irruption, and a victory over attacking foes. Opening with ascriptions of praise to Jehovah, and of his chosen seat, so elevated and beautiful, the writer gives a vivid description of the discomfiture and utter terror of the enemies of Jerusalem. Then follows an inspiriting call for rejoicing, on account of so glorious an evidence of God's presence, and majesty, and avenging righteousness. The inspired singer summons the rescued inhabitants to examine with scrutinizing care and diligence their city, so lately threatened and beleaguered, and now delivered. It was not merely in triumph and chanting psalms of victory, but to convince and satisfy themselves of the entire safety of Jerusalem, that they are thus invited to "walk about Zion, and go round about her; (to) tell the towers thereof: (to) mark well her bulwarks: (to) consider her palaces." Not merely to see, but to see and examine, to note the state of her walls and defences, of her towers and palaces; to see and rejoice in her safety and glory, to see and proclaim to future generations the wonderful care of Jehovah, that they too may have reason for the same assured and abiding confidence. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks,

consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following."

Though this Psalm was doubtless composed to commemorate some signal deliverance from confederated kings, it is yet a prefigurative song of triumph for the church. It is a type and prophecy—Jerusalem is the city of God. Zion, the mountain of his holiness, his chosen seat. It is by no accommodation therefore, but by strict and legitimate exegesis, that this song of ecstatic praise is applied to the spiritual conflicts and triumphs of the church; and our text, therefore, is a joyful call to the denizens of Zion to contemplate the security and blessedness of their chosen and lovely home.

The church is here portrayed under the aspect of a city, a frequent, striking and familiar figure of the Scriptures. So John, in the isle that is called Patmos, caught glimpses of the church redeemed, glorified, triumphant, and speaks of it as "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." And the house of God on earth is in its measure like that eternal in the heavens. The city of God, Mount Zion, appears as a city, with its turrets and ramparts, its parapets and defences, with its means of aggression and resistance, with capabilities to assail and protect; and in addition, with secure and peaceful palaces, where, in comfort and elegance, its inhabitants may find repose, refreshment and culture. Come then, ye children of the heavenly King, and ye who know him not, come, "walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following."

It is easy to discern that the text teaches a duty, and assigns a reason therefor.

I. The duty is taught in the words "walk about Zion,

and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces."

Before we consider what this duty requires or proceed to enforce it, it is becoming to observe with reference to it that we discover its importance from the repetition of the command, and the presentation of so many different phases and aspects of the duty. It is not a mere trick of Hebrew poetry that the direction is twice given to surround the city; partly in allusion to and in accordance with triumphal procession, but, as we learn from the context, also for the purpose of examination, the command is given twice, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her;" or, as Dr. Addison Alexander translates it, "Surround Zion and encircle her." The same words are used in the account given of the compassing the city of Jericho. The duty is of a complete survey of the city, of her exterior defences from every point of view.

This leads me to observe, further, that we see additional reason revealing the importance of this duty from the critical inspection required, the close observation of all points. It is not a hurried and cursory view that is enjoined, but a thorough, elaborate and extended examination of all that may reveal the true condition of the city. Walk entirely around the outer walls; make a complete survey of the perfect state of her defences, untouched, unharmed by the recent dangers. Count all her towers, and see that, though most likely to be the points of attack, not one is demolished or battered. Set your heart to her ramparts; apply your mind, observe closely both these outer defences, and the more secure castles and palaces enclosed by them, and discover if there be any trace of assault, any scar of conflict. This is the full meaning of the reiterated order. Does it not teach the importance of this careful scrutiny enjoined?

And what is this duty? Briefly, it is to note carefully the complete appointments of the city of God. The church of God is the divine institute for the extension of the kingdom of grace, and the ushering in of the kingdom of glory. The church of God is his chosen means of evangelizing the world: Consider how well equipped for this great contest; clad in heaven-tested armor and guided by unerring wisdom, it is hers to conquer. From turret to foundation stone, in every part, the eye of Omniscience hath chosen and the hand of Omnipotence hath fashioned this glorious structure, a fit seat for the King, a triumphal car for his conquests. Consider, too, that in the assaults made upon her, assaults most bitter, relentless and insidious, fired by infernal hate and malignity, no breach has been made in her walls, no outposts have been destroyed. Secure, intact, she stands the gleaming palace of our God, the glorious city of Jehovah! Her towers remain undemolished for the defence of the city and aggression upon foes. Her bulwarks are unbroken; can yet turn the tide of attack, as the stern, defying rock resists the billow that breaks in helpless spray at his mighty base. Her palaces are unharmed, and afford protection and refuge, comfort and ease to her inhabitants.

There is a significance in the use of the words that describe the power of the city: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." We have thus represented to us three aspects of the church to which we would now briefly advert—the aggressive, the defensive, and the recuperative; for while it is true that bulwarks, and ramparts, and even towers signify defences, yet the habits of ancient warfare and the structure of castles give to turrets and parapets, set at salient points, the idea of attack, sally, assault.

(1) The church as a divine institute is aggressive. The little stone cut out of the mountains without hands was to overturn the massive kingdoms that would successively rise, flourish and decay. From every turret erected for the protection of this city must be sent forth the missiles that are to strike terror into the advancing foes, and extend the conquests of Jerusalem.

Christianity is aggressive, necessarily so. Its doctrines are repugnant to the natural tastes. The carnal mind is enmity against God; and the whole system of divine teachings does violence to the sinful preferences of man. It is antagonistic to his desires, his opinions, his life. The mind may approve, but the heart detests the purity and perfectness of the truth taught by the church. Here there is irreconcilable difference; here there is an "irrepressible conflict." If Christianity be accepted, the whole tenor of his life must be changed; long-established habits and usages, the opinions that constitute the very fibre of his being must be completely, sometimes violently, uprooted.

But the weapons of this warfare are not carnal, but spiritual. The word of God is the sword. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is wielded with unerring accuracy and power by the almighty Spirit. It is his and his alone to subdue the proud and stubborn heart; in the case of those that hear, by the word.

Observe how, in the providence of God, the church is made aggressive.

(*a*) By the power of Christian example. Such is the constitution of our natures, such are the orderings of the

Most High, that example is aggressive, even of the humblest member of the fold. A pious life, a high and consistent devotion is a mighty force. It is one of the great arguments of Christianity, a bolt hurled from the hand of the Almighty, an argument irresistible, overwhelming all cavils and opposition.

Said a young man, as he appeared before the session greatly to their surprise, for he was known as a blasphemer and scoffer, pointing to an humble gray-haired member of the session, "That man's life slew me. I could withstand the arguments and appeals of the minister, but I could not answer the argument of his consistent life."

An earnest, godly life in any community projects its force. As a wedge it enters and cleaves. Its power is felt. It may not be so positive, but, like the odor of an unseen violet, its presence and grateful power are recognized.

Light is diffusive; it cannot conceal itself. Ye are the light of the world. Salt imparts its savoring and preserving qualities, from a necessity of its nature, to whatever it comes in contact with. Ye are the salt of the earth. As every word is borne by the wavelets of air to the remotest corners of the globe, so the influence of every Christian is felt to the end of time. Solemn thought! Tremendous responsibility! Yet so it is.

One of the most striking of the metaphorical descriptions of the Christian is that given by St. Paul—"living epistles, known and read of all men." Epistles and apostles are nearly the same word and the same thought. One means sent to, the other sent from. The apostle gives evidence of his divine authority. His credentials are from heaven; and the epistle gives evidence of divine destination and purpose. The Christian is sent to the world, to

be known and read of all men, not an inert, inactive, dead epistle, but living epistles.

(*b*) The Lord's command to the church requires aggression. Go ye into all the world. There remains very much land to be possessed.

As is true of the individual Christian, so is it of the corporate body. As light cannot but be diffusive, as leaven cannot but leaven the lump, so the church must be, by a law of its spiritual nature, expansive, aggressive, assailant. Activity is necessary to growth, and growth is essential to activity and vigor. The development of the highest spiritual life, of the widest capabilities of usefulness, demands continued, unceasing aggression, till the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The church, by its ordinances, by its ministry, by its institutions, is the great herald, proclaiming the tidings of salvation, and proclaiming it to the lost.

A missionary spirit is the most hopeful sign of a church's life. When there comes a standstill here, there is stagnation and death; and it is one of the most hopeful and pleasing evidences of life in our own church that it is so imbued with a missionary spirit—with the desire to evangelize the world. It is a proof that the Lord, the Head of the church, has work for us, and has crowned us with the honor of being coadjutors in this work, that he may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Oh! that more of the ardor and zeal of Wesley might pervade the ranks of the Christian host, or that the spirit of Paul might animate their endeavors.

Christianity, too, seizes human learning and advancement, and uses them in her aggressive warfare. The discoveries of art and science and the resources of literature are made tributary to this end. Steam navigation but

bears the missionary the more swiftly to his coveted post of danger, hardship and glorious service. The printing press multiplies copies of the word of God, and scatters white-winged messengers of peace and salvation among all peoples. The telegraph even is made auxiliary to the great work of bearing tidings of mercy. As "many run to and fro and knowledge is increased," the triumphs of the church are extended, and there is renewed call for gratitude to that God whose delight is in her.

(2) But the church has not only towers for aggression, but likewise bulwarks for defence. "The church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," is not only based upon eternal truth, but is set for the defence of the truth as it is in Jesus.

As the same troops and the same weapons may be used not only for offence, but defence, so in this citadel, what serves for assault may likewise be used for resistance. By the Word and Spirit, by precept and example, by learning human and divine, the security and defence of the church are accomplished.

The word of God is the great foundation. Against it are the most strenuous efforts, the most urgent assaults made. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. It is the constant aim and endeavor of the opponents of the church to undermine this most sure word of prophecy, wherein ye do well to take heed. Rationalism on the one hand discredits the sacred record, or casts doubts upon its teachings because inscrutable. Ritualism distorts the precious doctrines, and substitutes a shadow for a reality. The study of the sacred word, of its doctrines as unfolded by prophet and apostle, of its historical records, is the surest ground of safety. We cannot know it too well or reverence it too highly.

Dr. Candlish once answered a young student of divinity, who was much distressed at the attacks of literature and science upon religion and the Bible, and had asked what treatise he should study to fortify him in the truth and to overthrow error, "Study the Bible, young man; it is the best treatise on religion, the best safeguard against error."

As in other warfare, so in this, aggression is often the best defence, *i. e.*, without attempting to refute error, or to oppose assaults, it is perhaps the wisest policy to establish the truth, to promulge it clearly, fully, decidedly, and with the firm establishment of the truth, falsehood must vanish, and error hide its diminished head. The difficulty of proving a negative is thus avoided. The bold assertion and consistent maintenance of the affirmative carries with it weight, and is the best resistance.

The enemies of the church are numerous and crafty. Some are open and outward; others spiritual and insidious; but more are they that are for us than they that are against us: if God be for us, who can be against us? The kings may assemble, and pass by together; they may behold and marvel; but they shall be dismayed and flee in terror. Fear and great pain shall seize them; and they shall be swept away, as the east wind drives the scuttled wreck. Against all combinations and assaults the eternal promise holds good, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." "The gates of hell shall not prevail against thee."

Without entering into detail, may I not appeal with confidence to history. The strong arm of the civil law has been raised against the church and inflicted stern and heavy blows. The story of rapine, slaughter and persecution is a sad one, and yet it is a glorious one too. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Jewish hate, priestly venom, kingly cruelty, and Roman power

leagued in vain. Ten bloody persecutions in the earlier ages, and numberless deeds of injustice and crime in later times have not sufficed to overthrow the religion of the lowly Nazarene, and, notwithstanding opposition, against the combined craft and malice of thrones and altars the religion of Jesus has prevailed, and is now going on to still greater conquests.

But not only civil assaults, but likewise scholastic and literary assaults have been equally vain. Notwithstanding the empty mummeries and senseless fables of the Dark Ages, a light broke through the Egyptian blackness on the revival of letters, and the great Reformation threw its flood of light and liberty upon the poor, blind captives. The arm of ecclesiastical law, alas! as red with the blood of Christian victims as was ever the hand of empire, was palsied.

The shafts of wit and literature have been shot, too, at these bulwarks; but the church still stands. Voltaire, it is said, first wrote the *tract,* a hand-bill against religion. The guns of the enemy have been turned upon them, and the healing leaves of life are scattered among all nations. Infidelity in that phase has been vanquished. Hume and Paine are almost forgotten.

And in the present day the attacks of materialistic philosophy, the gropings of reason after the origin of life need occasion no fears. Do you ask me to refute their positions? I do not care to refute them. I look back at former contests of science with religion, and see that with increase of light there has been no real conflict. LaPlace argued from astronomy that there was no God. Yet how beautifully and triumphantly did the great Newton show that the hand that flung those wheeling orbs into the sky was divine.

(3) Consider further that the city hath likewise palaces

—for the entertainment of her King and people. In rapture the Psalmist sings, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion." God is known in her palaces for a refuge. Oh! my brethren, as we obey the inspiriting call to walk about Zion, are not our souls ravished with its beauty? It is not to the glorious visions of the heavenly Jerusalem, but to the earthly, the house of God, that reveals his special glory, that these descriptions refer. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." She is the King's daughter, all glorious within, whose clothing is of wrought gold. To her, as the spouse, the chosen of the Bridegroom, are the most tender and endearing epithets given. Beloved of the Prince, every feature and every trait that call forth admiration are delineated.

The chosen of the King, it is meet that he should so adorn her as to elicit our ardent affection; so he has not only given his city ample defences, but likewise secure, peaceful, and royal abodes.

Palaces signify—

(*a*) Security. The word indeed carries this thought with it, as if it had been royal castles. Let us remember that the church, the home to which the tempted and penitent sinner is invited affords security, safety and protection. Not that mere union with the church assures us of safety, nor that there is any mysterious tie or art in outward union; but that the true spiritual church, those who are really united to Christ, is secure, enjoying her Monarch's love.

(*b*) Ease is also represented in a palace. The weary heart here finds peace. Rest is necessary as well as labor; and our King provides for the refreshment and comfort

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of his guests. The church, my brethren, should ever be a home for the soul. Members of the same household, brethren in Christ Jesus, not only should they be safe from external aggression, and from falling, but there should be warm fraternal consideration, ready sympathy and comfort, peace, satisfaction and home.

"Oh! cease my wandering soul,
On restless wing to roam,
All the wide world to either pole
Hath not for thee a home.

"Behold the ark of God,
Behold the open door;
Hasten to gain that dear abode,
And rove, my soul, no more.

"There, safe thou shalt abide;
There, sweet shall be thy rest;
And every longing satisfied,
With full salvation blest."

(*c*) Palaces likewise afford instruction and entertainment. All that wealth and exalted culture can suggest or secure adorn the royal palaces of the great. Vast galleries of art, vast collections of treasures, and everything that may conduce to the elegant entertainment of cultivated guests are provided.

In the palaces of our King infinite resources display his gracious willingness to afford all needed culture to his own. It is a mistaken notion that the church is solely aggressive or polemic, and its work consists in conquest and defence; it is likewise didactic. It is a mistaken notion that all religion consists in activity and energetic doing for others; much of it is repose—meditation, introspection and internal growth. The most cursory glance at our great chart teaches that the church is the great

institute for spiritual education and edification. Pastors are to feed the flock. The great Shepherd himself leads by cool, living, tranquil waters, in green, refreshing meadows. "I will give you rest," he says, as well as, "Go work in my vineyard." Let us learn the lesson that the church is answering its mission not only in accessions to the numbers, but to the graces of its children.

In short, the church is the seat for the cultivation of the Christian graces—the home of the soul—for the development of spiritual vigor, and for the maintenance of spiritual repose.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." This is the chosen seat of our King. He hath made it a fit one for his Majesty. We may behold in nature a temple for his worship. Glory and power, matchless wisdom and divine magnificence gleam on every side as we consider the mighty works of his hand; but it is not in the burning sun, whose blaze the eye of mortal cannot endure, not in fiery Sinais, burning with a glory hundreds of times more resplendent than our own little king of day; it is not in the most majestic work of nature that he takes his chief delight, or has established his throne—"The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." The holy hill of Zion is the place of his throne, the place of the soles of his feet, where he will dwell.

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." Observe how important the duty so repeatedly and under different aspects presented, and how careful the scrutiny enjoined. Recall the duty required to inspect diligently every part of Zion, and remember that her work is aggressive, and also for the protection and for the

peace and edification of her people. Now why is this duty enjoined?

Many reasons present themselves which we have not time to name or discuss. It might be for the comfort of God's people, in seasons of darkness and peril. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." It might be for the encouragement of his children in the work assigned, to stimulate their endeavors and increase their faith. It might be for holy joy over the defeat of all machinations against Zion, for triumph over the enemies of Israel.

But the reason here given is—

II. That ye may tell it to the generation following. It is the duty of the inhabitants of Jerusalem to proclaim with exultant voice, with trumpet tongue, to coming ages, to future generations, the glorious defence of her King; to declare the deliverance, the safety, the triumphs of Zion; not with a spirit of empty boast, or merely to extend her fame, is this to be done; but—

(1) To invite and encourage them to enter its precious walls, and be partakers of its blessings. The church cries to you, oh! world. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

(2) To glorify God. It is not the church's victory; it is the victory of her King. Not a tower adorns her walls that he has not planted, not a bulwark encircles her gardens, that he has not constructed, not a palace affords its ease that he has not erected and beautified. Every feature upon the face of his lovely bride, every trait of character that glorifies her, is the touch of his love, the grace of his Spirit. To him she ascribes all glory. For him she lives.

(3) Again this proclamation is enjoined to invite the

faith and awaken and confirm the confidence of coming generations. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generation following: for this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

After so long an exposition of the teachings of this passage, I will not detain you with a consideration of many profitable and precious corollaries that might be drawn therefrom. To two practical reflections let us advert in closing.

(1) It is a hopeful sign when God's people rejoice in the triumph and prosperity of Zion; in her external and material growth, as well as in her spiritual life. It is a happy day when we offer our hearts to God as his abiding-place. The Psalmist speaks the longing of the soul when he says, "How lovely are thy dwellings, Jehovah of hosts. Happy they, the dwellers in thine abode. Ever will they praise thee. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I choose rather to sit at the threshold of the temple of God than to abide in dwellings of sin." It is only the truly pious heart that can thus sing; and David pleads this as a proof of his integrity and sincere piety, "Lord I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honor dwelleth." And it is likewise given as an evidence and an argument of God's blessing, "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favor her, yea, the set time is come: for thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favor the dust thereof."

(2) If the contemplation of God's earthly abode awaken in the hearts of the devout Christian such grateful, hopeful, jubilant praises, what must be the realization of his heavenly, his eternal temple! Oh! brethren, let us turn our eyes and our hearts oftener heavenward. If in the

days of her pilgrimage, amid the toil and sorrow and defilement of earth, the King's daughter is all glorious within; if travel-worn and sin-soiled, in banishment, the bride's garments are of wrought gold, what must she be when presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—pure, glorious, resplendent, the Lamb's wife!

If here, clouded by sin, veiled by shadows and stained with the blood and dust of conflict, the church appears "as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," what must it be when clouds are forever dispelled, when there shall be no night, and the storm of battle yields to the shout of victory, and the pæans of peace!

If the earthly temple, Mount Zion below, be so ravishing, what must be the celestial city, the new Jerusalem! Let us lift our eyes with longing. Let us think more of that glorious home. From this scene of change and sorrow we may sing—

"For thee, oh! dear, dear country!
Mine eyes their vigils keep.
For very love, beholding
Thy happy name, they weep;
The mention of thy glory
Is unction to the breast,
And medicine in sickness,
And love, and life, and rest.

"Jerusalem, the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation,
Sink heart and voice oppress.
I know not, oh! I know not,
What social joys are there;
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare.

"They stand, those halls of Zion,
All jubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng.
The Prince is ever in them,
The daylight is serene,
The pastures of the blesséd
Are decked with glorious sheen.

"There is the throne of David,
And there from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast;
And they who with their Leader
Have conquered in the fight,
Forever and forever
Are clad in robes of white."

"IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

A COMMUNION SERMON.

"In remembrance of me."—LUKE xxii. 19.

REMEMBRANCE of Christ is the first requisite to a true communion. Such a communion implies a mingling of spirit with Christ himself. We come here to-day laden with every possible memory, every possible care. Our sorrows, our sins, our failures, successes, wrongs, schemes—the memory of all these clings to us closer than our garments cling; and thus it comes to pass, my friends, that even at the communion-table many of us are chiefly occupied in remembering ourselves. God helping us, let us remember the actual Jesus Christ. Let even the memory of sin be subordinated to the memory of Jesus. Let us look out, not in; up, not down; let self be forgotten while we try and remember Jesus. Of old there went virtue out of him and healed all who sought to touch but his garment's hem, and—

"His touch has still its ancient power."

There will go from him to-day, here in this place, power, peace, pardon, guidance, just as we will to take them. At once the simplest and highest act of worship to which he invites us, is to remember him.

Remember him, the humble One. His humility was no sham. "He humbled himself," says Paul. Our idea of humility is often insufferably false. We think of humility as likely to arise from a sense of poverty, of non-

possession; but this is not the root of true humility. We speak of the humble people, supposing them to be the poor, the unknown, the ignorant. Not long ago a pastor exhorted his congregation and his Christian helpers not to be disappointed if they failed to find our poor as humble as they might be; and yet we may well ask, Why should they be humble? Christ believed the poor to be nearer the higher life of the kingdom, in most cases, than the rich. The non-possession of money does not carry with it any obligation to be humble. The truly humble man is the man who recognizes and bows to rightful authority. This was Christ's humility. "He humbled himself and became obedient." He recognized cheerfully the authority of his Father, though that authority and that Father's will might map out for him a course of bitter privation and bitter suffering.

Study for a moment this humility of Christ. Think of his knowledge. Here was One who knew *man, i. e.,* he was an expert in the most entrancing of all studies, and attained the rarest knowledge. He needed not that any should tell him what was in man; yet he was humility itself. Here was power. The most alluring of all possessions is the consciousness of power. For this, man will sell all that he has. For the possession of power every other gift is gladly bartered. It is power, not gold, that, nine times out of ten, the multitude seek for. Only the miser loves gold for gold's sake. Power intoxicates the strongest; it is the new wine that makes great men drunk. In Jesus, supreme power was supreme humility. Here was one conscious of goodness. The prince of this world, saith he, cometh and findeth no flaw in me. Divinely good, yet divinely humble.

This wisdom, this power, this goodness, cries, "Remember me." We come to him this morning, and painfully we

feel that with us dwells the very opposite of all his noble humility. Here dwells perhaps silly vanity, the thirst for title, suggested flatteries and compliments, wearying itself in the perpetual effort after self-advertisement, the meanest surely of all vices; or here dwells pride of display, a department in pride which we in these days have set ourselves to develop and cultivate. You go into a beautiful house in one of our great cities, and from every nook and corner, from stairway and drawing-room obtrusively pretty things force themselves on you; or again, our pride is of a different sort; it cannot demean itself to silly vanity or pretentious display. No, it dwells alone. On all things around, execpt its own small circle, it looks down. It dwells in its own lofty pleasure house, chooses its own gods, and calls the gods of all the rest idols. Or, our pride is the pride of self-assertion, constantly fomenting quarrels, sinful, foolish quarrels, imagining affronts, fancying injuries, and not always stooping to give or receive explanation or apology.

All forms of pride are found in our hearts, and to us this morning there comes the voice of him, the humble One, "Remember me." Silly vanity withers away. Haughty pride bows its knee at once. Display stands forth in its full tawdriness. I turn away from my most cherished playthings as a child might turn from its mud-pies. "Remember me," and self-assertion is at last dumb. "Remember me," and, humbled and abashed, when I remember how I have been borne with and forgiven, I banish all cruel and ungentle thoughts, and call to mind with sorrow all whom I have wronged in word or deed or thought. Yes, let us remember him in his humility.

Remember him, too, as the infinitely gentle. In him is almighty gentleness. Have you ever thought of the irresistible nature of gentleness? We know that by some

mighty attraction all the particles of our planet, all the atoms that go to form a pebble, are held together; and yet the mighty power we call gravitation never jerks us with its potency—it draws. There is no vast groaning and creaking of machinery. It is as noiseless as it is mighty. "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Have you ever seen the walls of some ancient castle or fortress, on which for a hundred years the creeping ivy has done its work, where stones, massive, indestructible, have withstood the assault of battering-ram and the fierce blow of the cannon ball? But the gentle tendril of the ivy has penetrated where force was defied entrance, and stone from stone has been parted and fallen. So is it in human life. How gentle people wind themselves around us! There are friendships, there are loves that take our hearts by storm; but the affection that conquers and holds us fast is like the sunshine and the dew.

Remember him as incarnate weakness. Offspring of everlasting power, he became weak; emptied of all strength, he visited us as a babe, to make us men, to make us strong. Oh! strong natures, strong positions, strong opinions, strong organizations, strong doctrines, strong churches, ye are all too strong for God. The old story of Gideon's triumph must repeat itself from age to age. The men that stoop are the men that win. That is a striking saying of Paul in 2 Corinthians xiii. 4: "We also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God." Incarnate weakness pleads with us, and says, "If you would do my work, if you would be like me, then remember me; be sometimes weak with me." "When I am weak, I can do all things."

Remember him as the divine sufferer. That story, so sweet, so sad, so familiar, who can tell? The path so marked with stones and thorns and blood, which he trod

for us from Bethlehem to Calvary—all the weary way, so lonely, so misunderstood, so contemned, along which he walked is full of suggestion for busy memory. In this simple ceremony we show his death.

"I gave my life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou might'st ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead.
I suffered much for thee,
More than thy tongue can tell;
Of bitterest agony,
To rescue thee from hell."

"Gethsemane can I forget,
Or there thy conflict see;
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember thee?

"When to the cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,
I must remember thee.

"Remember thee and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember thee."

Remember him as eternal patience. We are so often sadly impatient, impatient with our nearest and dearest; how then can we have any patience with our opponents? I read of one whose hot enthusiasm earned for him the name from Christ himself of Son of Thunder. I get a glimpse of that man's closing years. Banished to Patmos, on the silent island, surrounded by the separating sea, cut off from the joys and strifes of men, I hear him say, "I, John, who am also your companion in the patience of Jesus Christ."

Remember him as the risen, triumphant, glorious Lord. "Because I live, ye shall live also," cries his exultant voice, ringing from heaven. The bleeding sacrifice becomes the reigning priest. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Where I am there shall my servants be." "Remember my glory." He cries to us, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." "They shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads."

"Do this in remembrance of me." This is our dear Lord's dying wish. We have need to remember him, for the best of us are all spotted and marked by sin. We have need to remember him who has never refused to pardon us when we sought his face.

> "Be known to us in breaking bread,
> And do not then depart;
> Kind Shepherd, stay with us and spread
> Thy table in our heart."

Let us know that thou dost love us with an everlasting love. Let us remember thee, and remember that thou art the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and that the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but that thy kindness can never depart from us, or the covenant of thy peace forsake us.

HOME.

A THANKSGIVING SERMON.

"For there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family."—1 SAMUEL xx. 6.

THE story of David is one of peculiar and intense interest. So full of event, thrilling and memorable, so crowded with incident, daring or pathetic, it is no wonder it is one of the world's favorite biographies. From the first record of the youthful shepherd on the plains of Bethlehem to the last scene of the aged king, there is much to rivet the gaze and attract the thought. He was one after God's own heart; his chosen and most highly honored representative, the founder of an empire, and the progenitor of a royal line, of whose issue to the end of the age there should ever sit ONE on the throne.

And yet illustrious as is that renowned life, you will agree with me that there is naught amidst its glories more enchanting than his youthful prowess, and his beautiful affection. Will ever a child forget the magical sling and stone—the wonderful story of Goliath of Gath? Will ever one with a human heart forget the exquisite pathos of that love which knit David and Jonathan together as one soul?

Jonathan was the son of a king, the heir to a great throne. David, beginning life as an humble shepherd lad, was chosen by the Lord to be king over Israel in the place of Saul. The favor of God was on him. He had been a great conqueror. The maidens sang his praises in

the streets, and men shouted his name with glad applause. Saul himself, when first the youth, fair and comely, was brought to his palace to soothe his mental anguish by his skilful melodies on the harp, loved him and chose him for his armor-bearer. His conspicuous bravery and his masterly deliverance of the armies of Israel won for him honor, the devotion of the troops, the homage of the nation, the love of the king's daughter. Saul grew jealous, while Jonathan was knit to him and loved him as his own soul.

The words of the text were the message David gave Jonathan, to account to the king for his absence from his table at the new moon. His life endangered, he chose this method of ascertaining the real purpose of the king towards him. The touching story of that test—how Jonathan perilled his life for his friend, and then warned him of his danger—is given in this and the subsequent chapters.

It appears from the plea used by the youthful warrior and rival of the king that it was a custom in his father's family to have a yearly feast, to which the scattered children came to renew their family affections and strengthen their family ties; and it is the more evident that this was the custom of the family, for though the father was now not the head of the family, the command of the elder brother seemed to be as binding and as satisfactory. Jesse was an old man when the youthful David slew Goliath; and though afterwards, when David fled from Saul, he sought protection of the king of Moab for his father and mother (and they must have been then very advanced in age), Jonathan, who from his intimacy with David must have known thoroughly the circumstances of the family, says that his brother had commanded his presence at the yearly sacrifice.

Judging from his poems—these exquisite Psalms, the eternal hymnology of the church—David was a man of profound and tender feeling. Indeed, a poet must be an interpreter, both of nature and of feeling, if he speaks to the hearts of men. No one can write sentiments that thrill and move to action unless his own soul is stirred thereby. This is also true of the musician. David was both. The trumpeter (says an ancient sage) blows his spirit into the trumpet. He breathes into it the breath of life. This is the Horatian dictum concerning oratory. If you wish me to feel, you must feel yourself; and it is as true also of music and of poesy.

Judging too from the revelation given of his domestic life, we see that the poet-king of Israel was ardent, affectionate, tender. His was a loving heart, whether as son or friend, father or king.

Summoned, as we have been to-day, by the chief magistrate of this great Union of States, to spend its hours in praise and thanksgiving and prayer, it has seemed to me not unmeet that we should ponder the blessings of our happy homes in this Christian land and give thanks therefor. Read the President's proclamation, so brief and beautiful a call to gratitude, each line a gem, each statement an argument, and the whole touched with the divine touch of sorrow and love. The year has been one of general prosperity, though we have felt drought and apprehension. The pestilence has knocked at our doors, but, thank God, is yet kept at bay. The shadow of death has fallen across the whole country when the home of our honored chief magistrate was so darkened, and the sincere sympathies of the nation have been given without stint. A great revelation in governmental policy is decreed by the voice of the people without the clash of arms. Peace has prevailed. Order has been maintained. Our relations,

foreign and domestic, are such as give us tranquillity and security. Therefore, "it is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High."

And among the mercies for which to give thanks to-day I rate as one awakening sincerest and profoundest gratitude—the happy Christian home.

This is the yearly sacrifice, the "yearly feast," the margin renders it, when the family gathers together, when the scattered children and their little ones come under the old roof-tree. Thanksgiving day is a festival of home. As a national festival, it is specially sacred to home. What theme then so proper, as well as profitable and pleasant, to contemplate on our day of Thanksgiving as HOME?

> "'Mid pleasures and palaces tho' we may roam,
> Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home;
> A charm from the skies seems to hallow us here,
> Which, seek thro' the world, is ne'er met with elsewhere."

As long as the pulse beats the recollections of a happy and loved home will be sweet and affecting, yea, like the music of Ossian, "mournful and pleasant to the soul."

Remember that God first instituted the home. It is the only relic of primeval bliss left to man. The first home ever founded on earth was in Eden, the garden of sinless happiness; and the pure pleasures that cluster about it now are the sign of a life that once was and the earnest of a life that is to be; and of the three institutions which God established for the well-being of man—the home, the church, the state (and these are all)—it is not saying too much to say that this is the first not in time only, but in importance, and lies at the foundation of the other two. This is for man in innocence; the others were called for by the need of man in guilt.

But the Scriptures in other ways attribute the home to the direct ordering of the heavenly Father: "He setteth the solitary in families." "He maketh the barren woman to rejoice." "Lo, children are a heritage from the Lord." "Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee. Thy children (shall be) like olive plants around thy table."

For the gift of home let us give thanks to God the giver of all our mercies.

1. And first for the duties of home. Duty is the grandest motive to action. In words that have become immortal our great leader, Lee, has said, "Duty is the sublimest word in the language." God has hedged about this earthly paradise, this relic of Eden, with duties. It is the Father's duty to provide and to command. It is the mother's to guide and to nurture. It is the child's to learn and to obey. It is the duty of all to love and to forbear, to forgive and to be mutual helpers one of another. What if duties bring with them cares and responsibilities? There is no happiness without care, as there can be no bow without a cloud, no starlight, radiant and glowing, without the cold, dark night.

The spring of this duty is love—

"Home's not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart hath builded!

"Home! go watch the faithful dove,
Sailing 'neath the heaven above us;
Home is where there's one to love!
Home is where there's one to love us!

"Home's not merely roof and room,
It needs something to endear it;
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there's some kind lip to cheer it!

"What is home with none to meet,
None to welcome, none to greet us?
Home is sweet—and only sweet—
When there's one we love to meet us."—*Charles Swain.*

There's a mutual dependence which God has instituted in this institution of the family. Like the mysterious tie of gravitation that binds the planets to the central orb, and the whirling spheres to one another, love is that law—the hearthstone is the sun of the home, and each in his or her orbit revolves without conflict, distinct, yet united; separate, yet one.

The love of a father for his offspring is strong, wise, far-reaching. The love of a mother is more. There may be harshness and a sense of duty in the father's manner; but a mother's love is tender, deep, unsuspecting, warm; and even for the profligate and outcast, when reason is compelled to judge sternly, her mother-heart palliates every offence, defends every error, shields from reproach and loves to the sad end. The love of a brother is chivalrous, pure and ennobling, and that of a sister is perhaps the most sincere, unquestioning and exalted of which the world is cognizant. The child's love for the parents, implanted by nature, is at first reasonless, but fervent, and as time speeds on grows stronger and more appreciative. The golden strands of these natural affections glorify the web of life and make it beautiful. The highest and most mysterious of these holy bonds is that which links husband and wife together, so that "they are no more twain, but one flesh."

Thus bound together by cords of love, the duties that arise are taught both by nature and revelation. To God's word are we indebted not only for the clearest exposition and illustration of those duties, but for what makes a home worth the name; for home is not a house where one

is lodged and fed. There are sacred relationships and obligations that make it home.

2. Secondly, for the happiness of home let us be thankful. The performance of duty gives happiness. The recognition of heaven-appointed relationships affords purest satisfaction; and so of all happy places this side of heaven, a Christian home is the happiest.

It is the harbor of rest to the laboring man. The cares of life are laid aside. The hammer and the anvil are silent in the shop; the plow is idle; the store is closed. Darkness brings rest from toil. Then comes home—content—

> "Between the dark and the daylight,
> When the night is beginning to lower,
> Comes a pause in the day's occupations,
> That is known as *The Children's Hour.*"

The hour when in the firelight's rosy gloom, ere lamps are lighted, the household await the evening meal and the hour of prayer, is the sweetest hour in life. "Flittering noise and glee" run round the merry circle, then the restless, rosy, pattering feet cease, and the tired limbs of the little ones grow still, and the heavy eyelids, ere they close, shade the fairest eyes that ever answered a mother's fond gaze—then sleep, peace, content! Oh! what bliss even this world of sin may know, since God crowns the home with such happiness.

The sense of security (the old proverb is true in more senses than one, "A man's house is his castle") which each one feels in his own home, the assurance of privacy and of independence which occupies the breast, the consciousness of power, of influence, of rightful claim here upon one another, the mutual confidence and trust—all these and other reasons combine to render the home the dearest spot of earth. The supreme dominion and glorious servitude

of love make home so purely happy. When weary, here is rest; when annoyed with care and public turmoil, here is seclusion; when unnoticed in the busy throng, here is attention; when sore and jaded and disappointed in life's fruitless conflict, here is soothing balm. The poorest man is king in his own dominions. The poorest child has a mother's faithful love, one to whom he is the dearest.

3. But in the third place we should be thankful for the development which the Christian home affords of the gentler and purer traits of character, of the finer forms of thought and feeling.

Without such restraint men grow to be savages and women helpless slaves. In the stern conflicts of life, courage may be learned, but it is a brutal courage. When men come in collision with men in camps, in wars, in marine service, in the gold-room and the stock exchange, they grow noisy, inconsiderate, selfish, rude, heathenish. We may not admire the virtues which by the savage are regarded as weak and womanish, such as gentleness, forbearance, thoughtfulness, lowliness; but the pure and the good admire them, angels admire them, and such was Jesus, the Man of Nazareth, the grandest and completest example.

That home has this beneficent influence is apparent. Who can tell the refining effect on the feelings and life of a young man which a sister's pure and guileless love imparts? When women are sent forth to struggle in a heartless world for a livelihood, how soon do hard lines mark their faces, and penury and care and disappointment write their traces on brows that should be smooth and fair! When women seek to be men and to usurp their places, we see it in manners, in tones of voice, stridulous and petulant, in that hardness and pinchedness that indicate that their natures were not constituted for such stern

struggles, and by inevitable, inexorable law, weakness succumbs, and the weaker goes to the wall.

Let us be thankful for the providence that makes such a temptation useless, that makes our homes the nurseries of true gentility and considerateness, that softens sturdy courage with tender bearing, that strengthens feminine fortitude with manly deference and praise; that beautifully blends, as appears in the perfect example of Christ, the loftiest virtues of exalted manhood with the perfect graces of a pure and womanly nature.

4. It becomes us, moreover, to be thankful for our homes, because (in the fourth place) of the religious training and care we there receive.

In the formative period of life, in the season of deepest, most abiding impressions, to have parental love to instruct us in the great and precious teachings of God's word is a boon for which we cannot be too profoundly grateful. To be told by a mother at her knee the old, old story of Jesus and his love, to be taught to fold the hand and bow the head, kneeling at her side, and learn, "Our Father, which art in heaven," and that immemorial prayer of childhood, "Now I lay me down to sleep"—this were a legacy more priceless than gold. "But for a pious mother," said John Randolph of Roanoke, "I would have been an infidel. I could not forget her sainted face, her prayers, her God." One of the most beautiful incidents recorded in the life of John Quincy Adams, the great statesman and patriot, is that he always repeated with sweet simplicity the childhood's prayer he learned from his mother. I heard a gentleman of wealth and influence, not unknown to fame, say that when his wife died, his little daughter came to him and said, "Father, you must teach me now to pray like my mother." "I who did not pray, and needed to be taught by her! But God taught us

both, and led us together to her mother's God." To have the wise guidance of a pious father, to know the solemn delights of family worship, as Robert Burns so beautifully describes them in his inimitable "Cotter's Saturday Night," are holy safeguards and heavenly benisons of blessing.

The pious home is the foundation of the church. From these nurseries of godliness come the Christian ministry, and the teachers and exemplars of religion. The world were poor without them.

5. And, in the last place, the security, peace and perpetuity of government rest upon the well-ordered home.

If we prize the priceless boon of freedom, if social order and wholesome laws are matters of gratulation, let us remember that the home is the foundation not only of the church, but of the State. The destroyers of our homes are the destroyers of the State and the schools of vice, disorder and misrule. The enemies of our homes, the saloon, the club-room, the assignation house, the gambling places, are, as we all know, the enemies of good government. It is a significant fact that of the anarchists brought to trial in Chicago and in New York every one was either divorced, or single, living in morganatic relations (as would be said of royal blood, perhaps), or, in plain speech, in adultery; they held their conventions and concocted their nefarious plans on Sunday, and usually their meeting places were in saloon halls.

Let me repeat, we have reason as a nation to give thanks for our well-ordered homes, for the home is the foundation and safeguard of the State. There true and manly obedience to just rule is learned. There a lofty and independent regard for rights and for the right is taught. There consideration, affection and self-restraint are the governing principles, and these insure a pure and noble

administration of government. As one cannot be a wise ruler in the house of God "unless he rule well his own house," so is it in wider arenas and more extended spheres. The Sovereign is the Father of his people.

And for our own rulers, we have been favored of Heaven, inasmuch as the domestic life, so modest and worthy has kept them in contact and sympathy with the whole people. The little one in the White House, as well as the sad death of the beloved and estimable wife of our honored President, have elicited the interest and sympathy of the nation. Baby McKee and Baby Ruth have their mission.

Let us in conclusion rejoice that our land has not yet that crowded population that forbids ample domain, sturdy independence and self-reliance, and neighborly charities. Let us rejoice that not yet have we learned to live on the European plan, sleeping here and eating where we please, without the hallowed influence of one's own home. Let us be thankful for our homes—without pretense, but with plenty; without luxuries, perchance, and many comforts, but with love, which is more than all.

Let us destroy the dangers that threaten our happiness and our existence as a nation. Let us dispel the noisome moral miasmata of foreign life. The simple pleasures of home, without the sensuous stimulation of gilded vice and highly-seasoned, densely-perfumed temptations; where tastes are yet unvitiated (may it long be so) by Parisian customs and costumes, and where purity, sincerity and integrity are still reckoned the highest social virtues, rather than a graceful bow, a simpering stare, and silly volubility with a cultivated accent—may seem strange and wearisome to coxcombs and dudes, or the painted beauties of the *beau monde,* but we may safely leave the issue of our preference to Heaven.

Yea, let us be thankful for the religious sanctities of our homes; for the closet, the old ha' Bible, the catechism and the old familiar hymns; the family devotions, the sweet quiet Sundays, the holy festivals of religion to which we are accustomed. Happy are ye children who attend and love the Sunday-school, who were born in Christian homes, and under such benign and blessed influences.

But some of us mingle with our joys on this festal day sighs of unavailing regret and affectionate sorrow. Gladness is tempered by grief. As we recount the blessings and give thanks therefor, we cannot but remember bereavement and trial. It is a time for tears as well as smiles. Yet there are strips of blue between the clouds. The minor chords make the music sweeter. Let us remember the mercies that mingle with and soften our chastisements, and be thankful that God's way is always best.

Observe how the home of earth is the analogue of the heavenly home. There are mansions prepared. There is the All-Father awaiting his children. The Elder Brother is there; the husband, the radiant bride, the wedding feast, the reunited household. It is but the transfer of all that is sweetest and purest and best—of all that is holiest and happiest here to the eternal home.

Let not then the separations of earth, though mingled with sadness, oppress us. "When night comes, the different members of a family go to their separate apartments to sleep; the morning soon unites them, and waking or sleeping they are a household still. So is your family separated for a season—a part are here and a part are in the chambers of the tomb—but the bond is not broken; and soon the morning will come, when you shall see them face to face. The most important thing of all

would have been omitted had I failed to remind you that the best and greatest blessing which religion has conferred on a Christian home is in making its affections immortal. If we were all thrown together fortuitously, the companions of a brief moment, our true wisdom would be in moderating, or even destroying, those affections which would expose us to sorrows from the violence of their rupture. Far different is it when Christianity assures us that beyond the narrow pass of death our pure fellowships are to be perpetuated in endless harmony; that hereafter we should meet in our Father's house in heaven, with welcomings and rejoicings that never shall cease. Who of us will not be thankful to-day, with such a prospect gilding his skies and such a promise shining on his path?"[1]

"Oh! well-beloved ones, we hail the light
That breaks o'er the horizon of our night;
Waking to all the ravishing delight
Of our sweet home.

"Soon, re-united, we shall rapturous stand,
Amidst the glorified and blood-washed band,
Pouring triumphant songs at God's right hand,
In that dear home!"

[1] From a manuscript sermon by my father, the Rev. Drury Lacy, D. D.

ATTESTATIONS TO CHRIST'S BIRTH.

A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."—LUKE ii. 32.

ONE of the finest passages in modern literature is the story, as told in *Ben Hur,* of the meeting together of the three Wise Men. Occurring so early in the narrative, before interest is quickened in the author's hero, it yet fascinates the literary taste by the simplicity and strength of the conception and finish of its diction. The three, mysteriously convoked by their astrologic lore, journeyed westward, guided by the splendid star whose no less mysterious movement compels their obedience until it poised over the little town of Bethlehem, over the lowly spot where a young child was. Striking as a conception of the imagination, and graphic and thrilling as is the story, and beautiful and becoming as is the drapery that clothes the thought, can there be anything more exquisite as a picture, more simple and sublime than the narrative of holy writ?

"Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him. . . . And lo! the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: And when they had

opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

The huge, awkward camels that strode across the sandy plain, laden with the rich tokens of homage, stand without. The three wise men, in strange oriental garb, venerable for wisdom and years, adorned with the graces of culture and learning, enter the lowly lodging place, and prostrate themselves in adoration where a new-born and helpless Babe nestles in the arms of the young mother. This is the story as told by the fisherman, Matthew.

Not less exquisitely told is the story that Luke gives us. Gathered in the wide-spreading pasture lands, their numerous flocks grazing on the herbage, or resting in clumps, contented and reposeful, there are the simple, toiling country folk, rude watching shepherds, reclining on the earth, talking of their daily cares, or perchance, as they beheld the wintry stars, recalling the past glories of their race and country, and the strange, strong hopes that dwelt in their bosoms of a mighty Deliverer. Suddenly an apparition of such splendor and awe riveted and blinded their eye that they are sore afraid. The messenger of heaven speaks to them and to us, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Then what celestial music filled the air, what celestial glories filled the skies. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

"There's a song in the air, there's a star in the sky;
There's a mother's deep prayer, and a baby's low cry;
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King.

A babe is born under conditions so humble as to awaken the interest of sympathy. The patient ass eats and nods lazily, and the wearied ox reclining chews his cud. Tired travellers are they, who, in obedience to the law of the land, repair to their native city, and, while there was no room for them in the inn, find their lowly lodging with the beasts of the stall. That night—undated, yet forever memorable—the virgin mother brought forth her first-born Son.

When a prince is born, the street thunders its joy in shouts of gladness, the peal of the gun and the sweet clangor of bells, the streaming of banners and strains of rich music attest the general rejoicing.

And who is this Infant, this wondrous Babe whose advent strange and glorious signs betoken? When Hercules was an infant he strangled two serpents. When Minerva was born she sprang full-armed from the brain of Jove. Heathen incarnation, however mighty and marvellous, does not equal the simple and touching story of Bethlehem. What mingled majesty and meekness! What strange blending of poverty and weakness with supernal pomp and splendor! This helpless babe, to whom song and star led, whom sage and shepherd adored, to whom long lives on the finger-board of prophecy pointed, and for whose coming human hearts the world over yearned, is Emmanuel. God with us. The song of Eve is now echoed. She exclaimed, as her loving arms clasped her first-born, "Cain," that is, "I have gotten a man, the Lord." This is indeed the true fulfilment of that prophecy. This is the Man, the Lord. God manifest in the flesh—God-Man. Unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

When the wise men announced the meaning of their coming, and asked that question, "Where is he that is

born King of the Jews?" giving the fact that the mysterious star had guided them, Herod, the reigning king, was troubled. He made immediate demand of the scribes and chief priests, those versed in biblical lore, where the Christ should be born. More than seven hundred years before Micah had sung, "And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Then as the child, according to the custom, was brought to the temple, and the sacrifice of poverty was made, devout Simeon, waiting for the Consolation of Israel by divine direction prayed as he took the babe in his arms, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy people Israel." So too did the prophetess Anna, aged and pious, attest that he was the Redemption of Israel.

That a Light was to burst upon the world was the universal expectation. In the hearts of this oppressed and subjugated people there throbbed the irrepressible longing and hope quickened and intensified by repeated promise and prediction. The mystery which we solve with the effulgence of spiritual light shining upon the career and character of Jesus of Nazareth, they were slow to understand, and yet we read that all men mused whether it was he. "He" was expected. Jew and Samaritan looked for a Messiah; Roman and Barbarian had their expectations awakened; Oriental and Occidental alike waited for the Light. The Desire of all nations foretold five hundred years before as coming to fill the very temple then standing at Jerusalem with unequalled glory, was yearned for

with an intensity that could scarce find expression in words.

And this is he! whom Simeon fondled and blessed, whom simple shepherds wonderingly worshipped, and wise men from afar with gifts and homage adored! The Light for the world, the Glory of Israel.

It were fitting, then, that to him should such varied, ample, explicit and irrefragable attestation be given. Let us at this gracious time, when hearts and minds are full of sweet thoughts of Christmas, briefly note these testimonies and their lessons.

1. Those who study the mysteries and movements of the heavenly bodies find in them a strong fascination and a weird companionship. In the crucial research of to-day, and the relentless realism of science, by which I mean their impatient casting aside of all sentiment and the mathematical exactitude of their method, astrology is laughed at as a science. As a layman in science, I cannot here pass judgment. I firmly believe we are arguing *ad ignorantiam* when we condemn everything of the sort as unscientific, as belonging to a past filled with myth and superstitution. I know that Deborah sang in ecstatic triumph, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." I know that Jehovah asks, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" Who knows whether there may not be scientific foundation for the almost universal belief that heavenly bodies have their connection with the destiny of terrestrial objects? One of the most recent dicta of astronomy is that our sun, with its system of planets and satellites, is bound by some mysterious tie to some far distant centre, possibly located in one of the seven stars. May not this be true, and thus the "sweet influences of Pleiades" be more than a mere dream of poesy, or figure of oriental imagination.

But however led, whether naturally or supernaturally, whether by scientific research or by superstitious longing, the wise men of the east were guided by the star of Bethlehem. How, we may not know, yet they knew of the coming of the King. God has more ways of making himself known to his people than we in our ignorance may discover. Granted there is a God, a being of infinite intelligence, power, beneficence, and the problem is solved.

The star leads the wise to Christ! Is there here any adumbration of truth, of the truth that the study of nature, in her most remote and reticent aspects, leads to the revelation of God? In its last analysis is not nature but the manifestation of the working of God, and daily event (which Christians call providential government) but the manifestation of the control and guidance of God? Is reason any less scientific when it is devout and exclaims in adoration, "When I consider thy heavens, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained," "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork," "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge"?

2. God can make known his will directly by messengers sent from him.

The affrighted shepherds, waked from their drowsy watching, heard the majestic utterance, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Thank God, the message was not to the shepherds alone. As to them he revealed the good tidings by the lips of an angel, so to all people is it revealed by the pen of Luke directed by the Holy Spirit. Take this truth in clearly and hold to it strongly. Whatever study or science may toilsomely teach us as to God he can make himself known to us. He can speak to us directly or by

messenger. "He who planted the ear, can he not hear?" asks the Psalmist; and, by parity of reasoning, He who gave us power to communicate our ideas to another, can he not communicate his will unto us?

How happy the messenger who utters his will! Gabriel came to the virgin with the glad annunciation. With what sweet sonorousness spoke he who said, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people"! and what angelic music when from the celestial choir burst the glad evangel, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men"! Speech and music. Thank God for the tongue to tell his message and to sing his praise! Think you not those heavenly visitants were happy to voice their songs, to chant the sweet story? We are told that once, before the world heard such rapturous melody, when, perfect and glorious, the world, fresh from the hand of its Maker, poised by his power in space, appeared to their enchanted vision, we are told that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." With more tumultuous gladness must they have sounded their praises when the King was born who should be the Glory of his people, and should redeem the world from the hand of the spoiler.

"Ah! heaven drew nearer earth that night
Flung wide its pearly portals;
Sent forth from all its realms of light
Its radiant immortals.
They hovered in the golden air,
Their golden censers swinging;
And charmed the drowsy shepherds there
With their seraphic singing."

The angels told the tidings to simple shepherds. Not to the learned and great, the scribe or ruler, to kingly

authority or priestly lore did the direct message come, but to plain men at their humble tasks, doing their duty. While the wise may be led by star, the lowly are led by angels to the manger where rests the King.

3. Then, moreover, the sage and the shepherd are not alone. The word of God gleams with arrows of light that point to Bethlehem, and the wonderful life begun in the birth of the Babe of the virgin. To the devout student of God's word the name that is above every name shines out from almost every page of the Old Testament and every line of the New. Hundreds of distinct predictions as to the birth—place, manner, circumstances connected therewith, life, teaching, treatment by his people, death and resurrection—are accurately fulfilled in him. When questioned by Herod, the response was promptly given by the priests as to the place of his birth. To him give all the prophets witness. The law and the prophets, the law, prophets and psalms—all find their fulfilment in him.

So that the devout believer adds his attestation to that of star and angel, that this Babe is the Light of the Gentiles, the Glory of his people Israel.

So many reflections crowd on us as we seek to close these considerations with practical counsel that it is difficult briefly to urge them.

1. First, let us remember Christ is born; when, we may not know; but the fact is assured, the fact of tremendous import and of universal gladness. Let us be thankful that to us the good tidings have come, and aid to extend the same great joy to all people.

2. Secondly, let us remember God has his people everywhere, can call them and teach them in ways we know not. The wise, the lowly, the devout, those who are seekers after light, though it shine fitfully, those who are engaged in the discharge of immediate and simplest duties, those

who are awaiting the will of God, believing his promise—each, all are led to the same Christ.

> "It's pride of nature and caste of skin,
> Let Bethlehem's Babe the victory win."

Let us know that God's people are not confined to one class or race or time or clime. Let us welcome to our hearts and to universal brotherhood all who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Let us remember what is due our Sovereign. Our heart's devotion, our sincerest homage, our adoring gratitude, our costliest offerings. The shepherds immediately went to Bethlehem. They returned glorifying and praising God. Would they ever forget that night? would they ever cease to tell of those sweet, strange events? The wise men brought gifts, gold, frankincense, myrrh—gold as homage to the King, frankincense as worship to the God, and myrrh as gift of sorrow to the Man. The devout Simeon with reverent affection paid his homage and gratitude. What we have we give; what we are we yield.

4. It is one of the happy characteristics of our favored Southern land that this is the season for family reunions. The children and the grandchildren gather once again in the old homesteads over our State—for romp and play, to renew the sacred endearments of home and the hallowed bonds of kindred. Their own homes may be more showy, more modern, more elegantly furnished; but no spot can be more dear than the old home, the broad chimney, the mantel-piece where the stockings were hung in years gone by—so many in a row; alas! some of the feet that filled them are stilled forever, and others are, oh! so weary. How natural is Hood's simple and touching song:

> "I remember, I remember
> The house where I was born,
> The little window where the sun
> Came peeping in at morn."

There is hope for a man, however hardened and vagabond he may have become, whose heart still turns with yearning towards the old home, towards the aged left there trembling on the brink of eternity, towards the graves of his dead! And, oh! let us do all we can to make home the sweetest and most cherished spot to children. Make much of Christmas for the children's sake. Let the family ties be sweetened and strengthened. Deep down in the heart there is such longing. Children especially feel it, and amidst the restlessness of youth and early life, when the world tempts to wander, when pleasure, with siren voice, seduces, and gilded pride leads astray, the memory of these sacred hours at home is one of the sheet-anchors of safety and happiness. Let your Christmas then be such as shall make your children ever remember it with pleasure. No scripture tells us to observe it; yet as a season of festal joy and social pleasure, let it be precious to us; and if we record our gratitude for God's greatest gift, the gift of his Son. If we remember Bethlehem and the manger, the star and the sages, the shepherds and the song of angels, let it hallow our thoughts and our lives, let it make tender our feelings and beautiful our deed, let it irradiate our hearts and homes.

But if this happy season brings its pleasures in reunited households and gifts of affectionate rememberance, to how many does it unseal anew the fountains of grief because of the absent, the departed! How keenly now is the bitterness of bereavement felt, and how helplessly we wander through halls and chambers to us forever empty—yet forever consecrated by holiest memories; and yet even in this darkness, made denser because of the light of smiles that gladden so many homes, let us be thankful for such memories, memories that link us to earth and to heaven!

"They are poor
That have lost nothing; they are poorer far,
Who, losing, have forgotten; they most poor
Of all, who lose and wish they might forget;
For life is one, and in its warp and woof
There runs a thread of gold that glitters fair,
And sometimes in the pattern shews most sweet,
When there are sombre colors. It is true
That we have wept. But, oh! this thread of gold,
We would not have it tarnish; let us turn
Oft and look back upon the wondrous web,
And when it shineth sometimes, we shall know
That memory is possession."

Sorrow is one of God's messengers to bring us to him. She is a sad-faced angel; yet in the sadness we see ineffable sweetness. "No one is perfectly beautiful," says the great artist Murillo, "who has not suffered." Certainly the day that follows rain and cloud is the bluest and the sweetest. Certainly the chill winter air is the rarest, and the stars are brightest in wintry weather. Certainly the heart that has not known sorrow nor felt her touch divine is without the finest and tenderest feelings of which our nature is capable.

But the Babe of Bethlehem came to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. "Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish. Earth has no sorrows that *he* cannot heal." Let us remember we live for the living. Wherever there are hearts that can be gladdened, want that can be relieved, wherever children cluster, or the friendless are found, there let our ministries be felt as sunshine and fragrance.

Remember, too, the many homes about you—"homes," shall I call them? bare, desolate, bleak, cheerless. "Chill penury repressed their noble rage." Dire want, with gaunt fingers, clutches the slender throats of women and

children. Let your joy overflow and gladden these abodes. Let the humble and neglected know that the glad hour is come when Christians rejoice in a Saviour born. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—from sin, yes, and from wretchedness.

JESUS LOVED MARTHA.

A HOUSEHOLD SERMON.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."—JOHN xi. 5.

SCIENCE teaches the constitution of the sun; with unabashed gaze she pries into the profound secrets that shroud his genesis and existence. She calculates his course with undeviating accuracy. She has even penetrated the garb of light and torn away the blinding veil of unapproachable glory that covers his person, and revealed the cause of that insufferable splendor. She has caught a ray from his burning throne and measured its velocity, ascertained its weight and estimated its momentum. Its deep caverns of fire, its torrents of leaping flame, its variant coruscations of inflammable gas, its glowing and incandescent mass of inconceivable heat and intense splendor, all are known or guessed in the earnest quest of science.

And yet the unlearned man, who knows naught of the mighty orb that rules the day, and who dares not gaze with unshielded eye upon its intolerable blaze, who would turn away with blinded vision from the vain attempt, may equally with the philosopher rejoice in its kindly light and beneficent heat, and see its benignant power on the world of animal and vegetable life; and though he recks not of

"The fairy tales of science, and the long result of time."

He yet knows with gratitude when the ice-bound streams are loosed to vernal play, when the flowers dapple the

meadow, when the corn ripens and the mellow apples drop in the orchard, and the brown nuts in the still woods.

So is it, my brethren, in the study of that grandest of all objects of study. Theological science may, by searching scrutiny, teach us the attributes of the "High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy." With fascinated soul it may teach those grand abstractions concerning the mysterious Godhead, which, however learned, are still so vastly beyond human ken; and yet the unlettered Christian, most humble and untaught, though ignorant of scientific term and theological phrase, not knowing any argument for the existence of the Deity but that of his own existence, faith and redemption, may equally with the theologian rejoice in the revelation of the Godhead in nature and grace, and may see with thankful heart and swelling song his loving-kindness and condescension, his wisdom and tenderness.

Let us come then to-day, my brethren, not as scholars or scientists, but as sinners, needing grace, and saved by grace, and contemplate this revelation of the character of him whom we are called upon to adore and love. Aught concerning him claims our study and homage, but specially that which tells us of such phases of his disposition as more closely endears him to us.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Short and simple record, yet what a revelation of Christ these words give us! You know the connection in which they stand. Was there ever a bereaved family that lingered not over this wonderful story, that dwelt not upon these tender words, and drank not in the nectared sweetness of such honey drops. The sickness, death and resurrection of Lazarus, the story of the part our blessed Lord took therein, the stupendous results of this mighty miracle, being indeed the proximate occasion of the slaying of

Jesus—all are familiar to you. I do not purpose speaking of the whole record. This miracle, the most memorable, and for its lessons the most precious of all the mighty works of the Wonder-worker, is in itself like a sun, a setting sun, resplendent and glorious, and worthy of our long and loving gaze; but on its rich and unapproached beauty let us not now look. Its splendor illumines the whole sky, clouds lie piled in multitudinous and magnificent masses, gorgeous with every radiant color, and long streaks, like arched ladders of golden glory stretch from the horizon to the zenith. The whole picture rivets our eye and enchants the soul. Yet rather turning from this whole panorama of splendor, let us look on yonder spot, irradiated by the light of this wondrous miracle—a part, an accessory only of the scene, yet full of beauty, peace and comfort. Let us consider not the great event itself, but only this incidental, yet blessed teaching, that Jesus loved this family for whom this great work was wrought.

The brother was sick, very sick. The anxious and distressed sisters sent to Jesus the confident message (not to come, but) that he whom he loved was sick. It was at once the tenderest and weightiest plea. The whole result was known to Jesus, for he told his disciples. A word might have restored to health; a rapid return might have brought him to the loved home and the anxious household in time to have taken Lazarus by the hand and brought him back to vigor. But he had other and nobler and grander purposes; and so he abode where he was two days; and yet just here is the statement made, as accounting for this delay and lack of favorable answer to the loving message, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

Let us learn the lessons taught us by this simple and expressive statement; and first we learn—

1. Jesus loves his own, whatever their various characters may be. I think this a very comforting truth. What could we hope for or expect if this were not so? We are not learned or eloquent like Paul; we are not meek and holy like Moses; we are not gentle and loving like John; we are not brave and ardent like Peter; we are not like Samson, or David, or Daniel, or Timothy—what could we hope for if Christ loved only those of this type or that? There was John, the beloved disciple, who stood nearest the divine heart; yet Thomas received signal proof of his love, and Peter was rescued from a watery grave, and Nathanael and Andrew and Mary Magdalene and others likewise had special evidences of his favor.

I feel that we ought to be thankful that the inspired word tells us, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

And before I pass, let me here say that the word here translated "loved" has in it no trace or hint of passionate love, of natural love; but means that love based upon appreciation of character. So scrupulous is the Holy Ghost in directing the choice of words descriptive of the Son! It is not even the same word in the third verse, "Lord, he whom thou *lovest* is sick"—*that* might be a brother's love, a warm, natural bond. This is the love of God for the pure.

Let us be thankful that the word says, "Jesus loved Martha," etc. There is a meaning in the enumeration. There was the busy, practical, thoughtful, industrious Martha; I have no doubt an eminently useful and lovely woman, probably the oldest in the family and the head of the house. There was the quiet, meditative, shrinking and affectionate Mary, lacking strength, while possessing sweetness of character. There was the younger brother, of whom we know only this great thing, that Jesus loved

him, and wept at his grave, and raised him from the dead. This is the blessed teaching, Jesus loved each, Jesus loved all.

My friends, is this not a precious lesson? That notwithstanding acknowledged defects of character, for this is the love of appreciation, remember; that notwithstanding one weakness or another, a querulous temper in Martha, or a weak timidity in Mary, Jesus loves his own! Yes, if on you, poor wandering one, he has put his mark, he loves you.

> "Wonderful things in the Bible I see,
> This is the dearest, that Jesus loves me."

I am thankful that Martha's name is mentioned, that the text says, "Jesus loved *Martha.*" Her character is a noble one. There is too much disposition to depreciate it, to attempt to be funny over it. She had the care of the house, and the fact that it was a favorite resort for the Lord should teach us that she managed it well. Once only did he reprove her for undue solicitude about his own comfort. To her, it may be, the wise training of Mary and Lazarus was in part due, so that they became beloved of the Lord. We need such women in the church—brave, resolute, faithful, earnest, patient, diligent. Look how her character shone out in this great trial. Martha went forth to meet Jesus; she maintained her fortitude in distress, and conversed with her Lord freely in this deep affliction, and what a noble confession did she make, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, which should come into the world." For saying this Simon was called Peter, and it is the standard confession of the word.

2. But we learn, secondly, that Jesus not only loves his people as individuals, but he loves the household of believers, and the home of the pious.

Of all the dear and precious spots of earth there is none so dear as home, "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home." Where love throws out its anchor, and the tossing barque finds peace, oh! happy is the hour, happy the place. To the traveller, how sweet the thought of home. The fisherman's hut on the rattling shingle, and in hearing of the roar of the sea, though bleak and bare, is dear to him, dear to his children, and—

> "The wild wave's thunder on the shore,
> The curlew's restless cries
> Unto their watching hearts are more
> Than all earth's melodies."

It is said the French have no word for home. They know not the pure delights, the sweet restraints, the sacred hopes of home. Let us thank God for our Saxon ancestry, for our pious Scotch forefathers, for the "bleezing fire," and the clean swept hearth of home.

But that home is cheerless that knows no Christ, no altar, no gospel piety. There is no place so attractive, so rich in blessings unnumbered and unmeasured to families, church and State as the Christian home.

We are told of this home in Bethany that Jesus loved to go there. He who had no home, who had no pillow he could call his own, found here a welcome and a home. The members of the family all loved him. He loved them all. Oh! what sweet communion they must have had together! What wondrous conversations! How free, how gentle, how kind that intercourse between warm and chosen friends! Weary from walking and toil, oppressed and anxious, he finds there a retreat, and Mary, tender and affectionate, anoints the tired feet with costly ointment, the fragrance filling the room, and then bowing her head, her heavy hair enveloping the dripping feet, she softly and lovingly wipes them with this vail and orna-

ment of womanly beauty. After fatiguing labors, here he finds a place to rest and refresh himself, and Martha, with busy care, prepares for him a becoming repast, serving with her own hands, and Mary hears the words of honeyed sweetness drop from his gracious lips. Oh! friends, that was a happy home, a favored household. And such may yours be! Oh! is it? Is Christ welcome there? Is he looked for, longed for, conversed with? Do you pour out your soul in his ear? Do you commune with him? Is he your chiefest, your dearest friend?

> "His mercy visits every house
> That pay their night and morning vows."

Are you training up your children to know Christ? Do you know him yourself?

He visits his saints singly. If there be but one, he blesses because of the one, as the great woman of Samaria who entertained Elijah was blessed, or the house of the jailor for Joseph's sake. A good man in the house is a great safeguard.

But Jesus loves a family of believers, a household who love him. He visits them often, comforts them, and is refreshed and rejoiced by them. The praise of a Christian family, the prayers of a Christian home—these are sweet as myrrh and precious drugs to him, and ascend as incense.

3. But we learn a third lesson, and a very precious one, from these words, and that is, that Jesus loves his friends even though he is absent from them.

You know how often and how truly "'Tis said that absence conquers love;" but absence does not conquer his. He was now away from this stricken home, this sad and anxious household; but the sacred writer tells us just here (he who knew most of the Saviour's heart), "Now

Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Blessed fact!

"Nor time nor distance comes between" this Friend and his own. The apostle tells us that nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ; that is, sunder, sever us from that love; surely not grief and trial.

We do not need proof of this, brethren; the whole story of redemption is proof. He does not forget his own, even though they forget him. Look at Peter, denying shamefully his Master, and yet Jesus prayed for him, and in this very hour, in the very moment of his sin, with love and pity the Lord looked on him.

David sings, "He restoreth my soul." Yes, not only when for a season Christ is absent from his children, does he still love them (he is the same yesterday, to-day and forever); but when they wander from him, when they forsake and forget him, he seeks and recovers them; and so earnest is his quest and so great his joy that angels too rejoice.

4. But Jesus does not hide his regard; he shows his love for these distressed and afflicted friends of his.

In every way he reveals his human heart and his divine tenderness. Do we seek to comfort those in grief by visiting them? He went to them in their sorrow and bereavement, and when his visit could be of most comfort and assistance. Do we speak our broken words of condolence and sympathy? He spoke to these weeping sisters, spoke as no other had or could have done, words rich with meaning, hope and life. Do we show our heart-felt sorrow and emotion by audible sign? He groaned in spirit, and wept. Let us thank God for tears—

> "For the eyes that cannot weep,
> Are the saddest eyes of all."

Let us thank God for these tears shed by the Son of God

at the grave of his friend Lazarus. They have been the personal solace and balm of Christian mourners from that day to this.

But Christ showed his love for this family, not by presence only, or spoken word of comfort and promise, or sympathy and tears merely. He manifested most signally and gloriously his divine power and almighty love. That bold thief that robs from us our choicest and dearest, that with stealthy tread enters our homes and lays his relentless grasp on the most precious jewel there, or with brazen front knocks at palace door or lowly cottage to take what he will, finds in him a Master at whose bidding he surrenders his stolen treasure; a greater than he, a strong man armed, who can despoil him of his goods.

5. And let me further say, the lesson is here taught us that Jesus loves his friends, even though he delay to come at their summons, though he seem to deny their earnest prayer; for there is a special significance in the position of this text and the connection, and I wish you to notice it, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore he had heard that he was sick" (notice the *therefore*) "he abode two days still in the place where he was." Therefore, because Jesus loved these friends, when he heard of the sickness of Lazarus, he delayed for two days to go. Why? Notice the preceding verse, "For the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Then, my dear friends, let us learn and remember the lesson that Jesus proves his love for his friends by delaying his presence, though desired, by denying the blessing in the guise in which it is asked. Is not this a blessed, a comforting truth? Oh! it is one of the richest consolations of the word and human experience. If I could not feel this, if I could not believe this, my rock is

gone, and a poor, helpless babe, buffeted by the angry waves in the black night, I lie in the ocean the prey of sharks and torturing fears.

There are things we cannot understand in the dealings of God's providence. Sometimes we puzzle our poor brains, trying to explain the reason, or see the reason for this or that chastisement. "We shall know hereafter." Let us be content to know that it is for "the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Delays with him to accomplish what seems to us so desirable a result are always for some good reason. I cannot begin to show you the scripture illustrations of this. Look how long Joseph suffered under false imputation and imprisonment. His whole life is a strange and beautiful commentary on this truth. Daniel, David, Job—oh! the Bible and human experience are full of illustrations. Look at the mother by the bedside of her dying boy. Never cried David over Absalom with more intense grief than she, "Spare my son;" but even human reason can see that far better is it that the boy be taken then than to live to bring down an honored name to shame, and a mother's gray hairs to the grave.

Jesus loves us, though he delays. He shows us his love by these acts. He is wiser than we. Did he do just as we asked, in the way and at the time; would it appear that we were under the guidance of one who knows better than we what is best for us, would it not seem that we were at the mercy of our own weak and childish whims? Oh! let us rest our case in his hand. We are safe there, wherever we may be—

> "And calm and peaceful be my sleep,
> Rocked in the cradle of the deep."

One thing let me say, suffering, longing, waiting soul. Though he tarry, he will come; though he answer not in

the way we ask or expect, he will answer in far richer and more majestic voice. What glorious manifestations did he make of himself to this family of Bethany! What sweet, soft words, what mighty love, what signal evidence of his sympathy and power do we find!

You ask for health, for your child, for yourself. It is not wrong thus to pray. He may deem it best to answer by giving you patience, fortitude and spiritual health; and who would not say that that were best. You ask for peace, comfort, support. He may deem it best, instead of giving you this, on which you may too much lean, to buffet you with storms, to chasten you with trial, to fill this life with anguish and unrest, that you may the better enjoy and be the better prepared for the eternal peace and blessedness of your immortal home.

God's greatest love is shown by denying our requests. Think of it. Does a mother like to refuse to a child what she knows is earnestly desired? Is it not a struggle to her to disappoint and deny the darling of her heart. Think then thus of God. When you clamor for that which his wisdom sees is not best for you to have, when

> "In the dead unhappy night,
> And when the rain is on the roof,"

You long for aught, do you not know it is a greater test of the divine love to deny your petition than to grant it; and does he not thereby prove it to you?

Such, my brethren, are some among many precious lessons taught us by these words, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Jesus does love his own, whatever their varying disposition. He loves the pious household; he loves them, though absent from them; he reveals his love, and he shows it by wise delays and prudent denials. Let us bind these truths about our heart for our comfort and instruction to-day.

Let me close with these three thoughts:

1. Is yours one of these happy homes, frequented by Jesus? If not, is it your fault or his?

2. The true question for our spiritual welfare is not, Do you love Jesus; but, Does Jesus love you? The Scriptures tell us not of love, but of faith. Dost thou believe? All things are possible to him that believeth. It is faith that worketh by love, not love that worketh by faith. The vital question is not, Do you love? but, Do you believe?

3. Jesus does love you, even you; and you may say, Martha and Mary and Lazarus had the proofs; so they did; and so have you. Every answered and every unanswered prayer is a proof; but you may say no such signal mark has he given as in raising Lazarus from the dead. Yes but he has. He has done even more; *he has given himself for you! He has died for you!* Greater love hath no man than this.

WHAT SHE COULD.

A SERMON ON CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

"She hath done what she could."—MARK xiv. 8.

THERE is nothing to an aspiring mind so intoxicating as fame. To be known, revered and honored is a noble ambition; but to have lasting renown, to be respected while you live, and to be assured that after death your name and deeds will be embalmed in the memory of thousands is enough to fire the energy and the purest aspirations of man. In letters of blood the warrior writes his name upon the scroll of history. The glittering jewels of diadems and coronets lure the emulous longings of many that thus a name will be transmitted to posterity. Yet, after all, is there anything so fleeting? A bubble that bursts at the first breath, a puff of vapor that rises, gracefully, beautifully, rapidly, till poised in mid air, illumined by the morning sun it gleams like molten silver, and then fades away to nothingness. Even of those whose reputation we regard as enduring, the great men of history, how circumscribed is their renown; how few who know or care to know aught of them save their names! We speak of their fame as imperishable, and of their names as

> "The few, the immortal names,
> That were not born to die."

How ephemeral their crumbling marble! How tarnished their mouldering brass! Where the Latin tongue is known is the name of Cæsar recorded, and where the

Greek language is read the glory of Alexander is declared; but a greater than the Muse of history or poetry hath said, "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached, throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Unknown, unnamed woman, how gracious and glorious the meed awarded thee, a woman of Bethany, by the King! How widely spread thy deed of love, how everlasting thy fame! When conquerors are forgotten and the kingdoms they have reared in carnage have faded from history, when the tongue of orator is silent, and the song of the poet is hushed, when art and glory have vanished, and even the great globe itself hath perished amid the blaze of a burning world, and in presence of assembled multitudes, thy deed will be remembered and thy name made known.

To illustrate, let me conceive not an impossible, though an impracticable, event. Suppose that this day, in every pulpit in every land, the servants of God ministering in his temple, should read this simple story to the assembled worshippers. The deed would be in the minds of more than one hundred millions of people, and proclaimed by more than eight hundred thousand tongues. How widely spread would be the knowledge and the renown! And yet even far more extended than this, has been and is to be the fame of the woman of Bethany.

What sweeter words of praise can we think of than these that the Saviour hath spoken of this unnamed woman, "She hath wrought a good work on me. She hath done what she could. She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." To be defended by such an

Advocate against the unkind and suspicious remarks of his followers is a sweet and comforting assurance.

It is not my purpose to explain or bring to view all the lessons of this memorable interview; but before developing the thought of the text, let me give a word of exposition.

Were there one, two, or three distinct anointings of the Saviour while in the flesh on the earth? It is a matter of curious inquiry rather than spiritual profit, and yet everything connected with his eventful life is interesting and worthy of study. I am inclined to agree with the views of Rev. J. C. Ryle:[1]

"The first is the woman spoken of in the seventh chapter of Luke, thirty-sixth and fiftieth verses. The city in which this anointing took place does not appear to be Bethany. The woman is spoken of as having been a sinner. The house is described as that of a Pharisee. The anointing was of our Lord's *feet*, and not of his *head*. There is strong internal evidence that this whole transaction took place at a comparatively early period of our Lord's ministry. All these points should be noticed.

"The anointing described by St. John appears next in order (Chap. xii. 3-10). This we are distinctly told was *six days* before the passover. The person who anointed our Lord was Mary, the sister of Lazarus. The part of him anointed was again his *feet*, and not his head. These points ought also to be noticed.

"The anointing described by St. Matthew and St. Mark comes third in order (Matthew xxvi. 6-13; Mark xiv. 3-9). This we are told was only two days before the feast of the passover. In this case we are not told the name of the woman who anointed our Lord; but we are told that the ointment was poured on his *head*.

"Anointing was a far more frequent practice than we in this climate can imagine. It seems perfectly possible that the same thing may have happened three times.

"The main difficulty is the close similarity of language used at the anointing described by John and at that described by Matthew and Mark. This can only be explained by supposing that our Lord twice said the same things."

[1] Ryle on Mark.

"She hath done what she could." Let us take this part of the beautiful incident here recorded, our Lord's words of defence and commendation, and meditate upon them. May we be stirred to our duty by the contemplation that when life's duty is done, this noble eulogy may be ours.

1. Let us learn this first lesson, that love to Christ prompts the most acceptable service. The motive of motives that should impel us with a generous and all-consuming zeal to do the Master's work is love to him.

Gratitude is the sweetest of impulses. Utterly unable to reward our benefactor, all our substance too paltry a gift to offer, all our service too meagre a return to present, it is sweet to lie at his feet, beneath his eye who can see the secrets of our breasts, and expose to him a heart throbbing with gratitude for his amazing, immeasurable love.

At the cross, to gaze and say—

> "Here, Lord, I give myself away,
> 'Tis all that I can do."

The love of Christ to us, was not this love; it was not the love of complacence, nor of benignant esteem, but the love of mercy, of ineffable pity. Ours to him is the love of adoring gratitude, gratitude for deliverance from every evil, from all evil—from the sum of evils.

To what service should this gratitude prompt? Ah! my friends, love is ingenious, it anticipates demand and desire. See with what tender assiduity the devoted mother watches by the bedside of her sick child. How she cools his throbbing temples with her own soft hand; how she moistens his parched lips with refreshing liquids; how she observes every need, and supplies every wish before it is expressed.

Love to Jesus Christ swelling the bosom and pulsing through the frame, needs no hint to direct its manifesta-

tions. With tender thoughtfulness the wishes of the Master will be sought for and obeyed. The martyrs and confessors through love to him endured the stake and the flames; and the days of martyrdom and confession are not over. Many tests cruel and severe are still placed on God's children, tests imposed by society, by popular demand, as well as by kings and priests, that must be borne, and that are borne, blessed be God's grace, cheerfully and gladly for Christ's sake.

This woman of Bethany loved the Saviour. At great cost, doubtless at great sacrifice, she procured an alabaster box of ointment, very pure, precious and rare. She deemed no offering too rich to lavish upon him. She poured the fragrant oil upon the brow soon to be pierced and bloody, soon to be cold and pallid. With generous delight and abundance she broke the casket, and the rich perfume descended upon the Saviour's head. Why? She loved him. She showed thus her devotion to him. It was deep, abiding, heart-felt love that prompted this delicate, tender, womanly act of service.

My brethren, let us renew our love for the Master. How can I urge you to service, if this motive be lacking? How will the stream flow if the fountain dries up? How may we hope for green grass along its brink, nodding blooms, fragrant foliage, abundant harvests, all the fruits demanded, if the stream is not fresh and flowing? A cause must be equal to its effect. There can be no great service, no great self-denials, and enterprises, and consequent toil and reward, unless there be great love.

Do you remember that when David was in the cave, fleeing from the wrath of Saul, surrounded by his enemies, he longed for water from the well of Bethlehem? Three of his brave soldiers, at the risk of their lives, penetrated the cordon of foes that encircled the cave, and brought

their prince the longed-for draught. Why did they do it? Because they loved their sovereign. Did you ever hear of any great heroism that was not in like manner prompted by love?

This must be our motive; let us, if we have left our first love, repent and do the first works. Let us kindle anew the sacred flame, and do what we can.

2. Let us learn, secondly, that the measure of duty is the measure of ability. What we can do, we are required to do. "She hath done what she could." "What she could!"

Let not this truth become trite from repetition. Let us not forget its meaning, its importance, its present pressing power.

We are not to do more than we can do. That is very clear. God does not set us impossible tasks, or require impossible duties. Our responsibilities are to be measured not by what we have done, nor, in its strict sense, by what opportunities have come in our way, but by our ability to do, and by the opportunities we might have made. A man who cannot see is not required to survey, *e. g.*, or do anything for which clear and steady vision is essential; nor yet is one of broken limb or impaired health to bear the burden of a strong man.

But as it is undoubtedly true that we are not to do more than we can do, is it not equally and overwhelmingly true that we are not to do *less* than we can do? Ah! here the shoe pinches. We defraud God, we rob God, we disobey his will, if we do less than we can do. We must do what we can.

Let me recall to your mind a very familiar incident that illustrates this. Our Saviour sat once over against the treasury. He sits over against it still; he sees what you contribute, as he saw that day in the temple. Rich men poured in large gifts; he did not notice or commend them.

A certain poor, widowed woman, humble and obscure, thenceforth to be famous and an example to all coming time, came and cast into the treasury two mites—all her living! The lips of the Saviour are unsealed. "She hath cast in more than they all," he said. Why this great commendation; this little sum was not equal to their large gifts. Ah! the reason was, she had given all, she had done what she could, all she could, and the others had not.

Sometimes a mother wrings her hands in speechless, tearless agony over her infant in the embrace of death, because, perhaps, not thinking the babe so ill, she did not do all that now she wishes or thinks could have been done to save the child's life. She bewails that all was not done that might have been. Ah! did you ever think in that day how this thought may burden and pain you, that you had not done all you could?

Not, my hearer, that the most abounding and acceptable service is any meritorious ground of salvation. Remember, love prompts to the duty. The service is merely the fruit, the evidence. No one can earn heaven by any service even for himself, far less than for others.

Ability, then, is the measure of duty; and of that ability you are not the judge, but God. It is for the Master, the Master only, to say "she hath done what she could." We are not to set ourselves the task, but with utmost fidelity to do the work assigned us—what we can, what a hearty love for Jesus prompts.

3. We learn further from this word that whatever service we render from love to Jesus meets his acceptance; whatever reveals our personal devotion, our ardent attachment to him secures his approval.

"She hath done what she could," he says. It was not the costliness of the ointment, nor the richness of the fragrance, nor the value of the stone that held it that

won this word of approbation. It was not the lavish tribute to his person, the grateful anointing that so pleased him; but it was the evidence here given, the revelation here made of the love of this unnamed woman of Bethany. It was a pleasing proof of her love for his person.

So, my brother, it is not the difficulty of the task you set yourself, not the arduousness of your labors, nor the formidableness of the obstacles you overcome; not the greatness nor, humanly speaking, the value of your service, but the motive that prompts to it that he beholds and approves. He sees the heart, and however humble the service done him or for him from love to him, he smiles upon and blesses. You may rear elegant towers, palaces of splendor and beauty, for his service, dedicated to him; you may build orphan asylums and houses of refuge for all classes of needy and suffering, if the supreme glorifying motive be absent, it is vain. Costly churches, with long-drawn aisle and fretted vault, unsanctified by this motive, are no fit abode for the Most High. Built from such motive only, however elegant they may be, I doubt not he accepts.

Look at this act. No casket could be so precious, no ointment so fresh and grateful, no perfume so rare and delicious as to be worthy to be broken and poured out on the sacred head of the Son of God. No temple is fit for his residence, no service merits his reward; yet poor and broken and utterly unworthy our efforts, our costliest gifts or meanest offerings, he notwithstanding accepts and approves.

4. Let us further observe that Christ defends those who love and serve him from unjust accusations and suspicions. "She hath done what she could," he says; and to whom? To those who had objected to this lavish offering of costly ointment as an extravagant waste, as an unwise expenditure and application of means.

"There were some," more than one of those present, very likely, of his disciples "who had indignation within themselves" when they saw the grateful service rendered, "and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor. And they murmured against her." Marvellously economical and charitable do some people become when rich offerings are made to the King! I tell you, my friends, we may be economical in every other way, but we must not, we dare not be in giving to the Lord's honor. We may stint ourselves everywhere else, and in every other direction, but, oh! not here—not in giving to Jesus, who stinted not his richest heart's blood for us. But let the Saviour answer these cavils and unkind words, "And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good; but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could." Ah! brethren, no word of censure here, but so sweet and gracious a defence! Knightly, generous and tender, from the King of kings for a poor woman, maligned and rebuked.

Blessed be his name, he reads the heart. He knows the motive. If love for him be there, he defends and sustains amid the cold world's sneers and censure. He does not misunderstand or misinterpret. The poorest, paltriest service for him, whatever others may say, he receives graciously.

5. This leads me lastly to observe that Christ commends the performance of acts of personal devotion to him.

It is not uncommon in the present day to hear the performance of duty mentioned as not worthy of commendation. It is only what is to be expected, and does not merit praise or reward. I do not so read the Scriptures or learn

God's will thus. There is a truth, a half-truth, in the assertion, and therein is its danger. After all that the best have done, they are but unprofitable servants. This is true, true indeed. They have but done what was bidden; yet for all that we read in the great day of assizes the word of acquittal will be, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord." There is no injustice there.

So here our Saviour commends this proof of love, "She hath wrought a good work." Endless fame was assured. The words, it is true, were not spoken to her, but to others for her defence and approval, and doubtless in her hearing.

Judicious praise for the faithful performance of duty is eminently wise and proper. It must, of course, be dealt in most sparingly and with caution. It is of the greatest encouragement to those under employment if their fidelity is observed and approved. Encourage your child in his studies and efforts to secure knowledge, if you see him in earnest, sedulous and attentive. Especially, Christian parent, if he is battling with temptation and sin, and resists, sustain him by your smile. It will be of vast support to him.

Our Lord commended this women's love and act. It was a simple deed, but it was not unnoticed, unrewarded; and what a glorious reward! Our Master's service is pleasing and delightful, and leads to results out of all proportion and expectation. He gives liberal interest; he bestows large benisons and with a princely hand.

Cast your eye forward to that day of days, that day for which all other days are made. Amid that throng that gather before the great white throne you will be found. All disguises will be torn aside, every mask removed. You, poor child of God, will be there, and amidst that

mighty throng will not be overlooked. Here, perchance, unknown and unhonored, shrinking and unseen, there you will be openly acknowledged as worthy. The Judge, from whose august presence heaven and earth affrighted flee away, will be your Friend, your Advocate, your Defender. No mistakes and misjudgments of earth will affect him. Here despised perhaps, you will there be publicly crowned. Turning to you, his benignant face beaming upon you, will you hear the sweet and gracious words, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Then will you answer, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee? or thirsty and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison and came unto thee?" And the King shall answer, "Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Oh! sad, doubting, shrinking soul, how sweet the word, how large and blessed the rewards! He gives like a King.

And now in conclusion, my dear brethren, let me ask, Have you done, "what you could?" Perhaps some one may say, "Oh! that I knew where I might find him; were he here, could I stand at his feet, I too would deem no offering too rich for my Lord, no sacrifice too great to bear for him."

"Say, shall we yield him, in costly devotion,
Odors of Edom, and offerings divine?
Gems of the mountain, and pearls from the ocean;
Myrrh from the forest, or gold from the mine?

"Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

"The poor ye have always with you," says your Lord. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." What can I do? you ask.

"If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gates,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh! teach the orphan boy to read,
Or teach the orphan girl to sew."

Is there nothing you can do for Jesus? Can you train no immortal in the way of life? Can you smooth no brow of suffering? Can you ease no heart of pain? Can you speak no word of cheer and comfort? Let love throb in your heart, and there will be no lack of opportunity to reveal it by service.

This word is spoken of a woman. Did you ever observe that our Saviour's highest words of commendation, his sweetest words of approval have been of woman and woman's service? "Daughter," he says in ineffable tenderness, "be of good comfort." And how she has merited it! How deft her fingers, how delicate her thoughtfulness, how tender her ministries, how tried her devotion.

"Not she with traitorous kiss her Saviour stung,
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;
She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave."

May it be yours, Christian woman, so to yield your powers to the service of Jesus that your brief and glorious history, your noble and glowing epitaph may be

"SHE HATH DONE WHAT SHE COULD."

THE CHOICE OF BARABBAS.

A SERMON ON DECISION.

"Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber."—JOHN xviii. 40.

REV. ROWLAND HILL, a distinguished and learned non-conformist divine of England, relates the following incident, of the truth of which I have no doubt, as it is frequently and variously recorded: Rev. Dr. Hugh Blair, an eloquent minister of Edinburgh, once concluded a discourse on the Loveliness of Virtue with this glowing apostrophe, "O Virtue, wert thou incarnate, such would be thy charms, all men would love thee, and bow down and worship thee." In the afternoon his colleague, Rev. Dr. R. Walker, ascended the same pulpit and addressed the congregation, "My reverend friend observed this morning that if Virtue were incarnate, all men would love her. Virtue has been embodied in the form of the Son of Man. How was he treated? He was despised and rejected of men. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. Nay, he was defamed and insulted, scourged and mocked, led forth to Calvary and crucified between two thieves. Such is the award the natural heart renders to embodied Virtue, to incarnate excellence."

Is not the reply of the learned Professor just and true? The carnal mind is enmity against God. Virtue in some of its secular and remunerative phases may be pleasing to man; but holiness is repugnant to his nature. His heart repels that perfect purity that God requires, and chooses

sin, preferring it and delighting in it. Nay, were Christian restraints withdrawn, how speedily would he relapse into more open and detestable indulgences, and vice rule supreme in his desires and affections. Our memories are treacherous indeed if they cannot recall during the scenes of the war, and shortly thereafter, illustrations of this assertion. Debauch, intemperance, profanity are too often the concomitants of the camp, and removal from the happy guards of home, law, Sabbaths and religion. Virtue, purity, holy excellence are not chosen, are not loved by the natural heart.

History presents us many confirmations of this melancholy truth, the saddest of which is seen in the strange spectacle presented to us in the text. Look at the picture as the pen of inspiration has portrayed the scene.

It was early day, scarcely past the dawn. In front of the governor's house a surging mob, swaying under the movement of some fierce passion, clamored and yelled. What does it mean? Their faces look haggard and hard, their eyes bloodshot and cruel, their voices are hoarse with shouting; they have been up all night, either in the garden of sorrows arresting their victim, or dragging him unresisting and dumb to the high priest's house, first to Annas, then to Caiaphas; and because power to take life is not vested in their hands, they hurry their prisoner, as soon as it was day, to the Roman governor's house. Had not the noise of their tumult filled the city, Pontius Pilate must have been amazed at so early a summons to the hall of judgment, and at the discordant and clamoring crowd. Who is the victim of popular wrath? Who the unoffending cause of such profound excitement? There he stands, wan from the weary watching and agony of the live-long night, loaded with insults, yet silent, calm and majestic. 'Tis Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews bitterly accuse him.

We may well ask with the astonished, yet weak and vacillating governor, "Why, what evil hath he done?" Ah! my brethren, no evil. Pilate could find no fault in him; no, nor yet Herod, to whom he had been sent this same day. One charge after another was brought: violation of the Jewish law, under which Pilate had no jurisdiction, and there was no death penalty; then of treason against Cæsar's government, which was not sustained. But though not proven guilty or worthy of death, Pilate appealed for his life, in the exercise of executive clemency, offering to the Jews to release him according to the holiday custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast. It really seemed to be the desire of this weak and cruel prince to spare Jesus, could he do so without incurring the enmity of the angry mob. Three times he declares he finds no fault in him. He offers to exercise his power in releasing him.

What was the alternative? "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." Who was Barabbas? Now Barabbas was a robber, a highway bandit, incarcerated at that time and awaiting execution for murder, highway robbery, and rebellion—as bad a man, as guilty a criminal as ever fell into the angry clutches of a righteous and offended law. Jesus and Barabbas! Forgetting all the deeds of mercy, the nobleness of nature, the mighty works of grace, forgetting the words of wisdom, the sweet and precious invitations, and all the love and gentleness and majesty of the One, and forgetting too the base crimes of the other, the horrid offences against law and humanity and country, for which vengeance was justly prepared at length, they cried that Barabbas be released, and that Jesus be crucified! Justice is cheated of its victim, and popular wrath gluts itself only with innocent blood! Oh! astounding scene, oh! astounding choice!

And yet with this memorable event familiar to every child in a Christian land, with the sad and dreadful fulfillment of the imprecation of the infuriated Jews who cried, "His blood be on us and on our children," confronting us, still the same strange scene is enacted, the same strange choice is made.

You, my hearer, would not be guilty of such a crime, you would not so stultify yourself as to make so cruel, so unwise an election. So you say to yourself. Yet if the Spirit of Almighty God opens your eyes to see yourself and your sin, you will find your sin near akin to this of the Jews.

Let us look at the teachings of this act of the Jews, and seek a personal application.

We are taught—

I. Personal responsibility. Without entering into metaphysical argument to prove individual free agency, and consequently individual responsibility, an appeal to fact is sufficient to prove the exercise of choice. Here is the fact. To that throng of passion-moved Jews the alternative is offered, "Will ye that I release unto you Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" There is the offer, you observe, distinctly made. More than this, the power is exercised, the choice is made, "Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas." We see here, then, that these Jews had the power of choice, that the alternative was presented to them, that they exercised their power of choice, and that they chose Barabbas.

Let us generalize; let us make a legitimate deduction from these facts. These are but the illustrations of a general law. Man is free, man has the power of choice, man has presented to him a like alternative; man exercises his choice; and, alas! that it is so true, man often, most usually, chooses evil instead of good.

Are not these general deductions just? Is it worth while to prove it? Unless you are honest with yourselves I cannot convince you of it; but if you will be honest, I need make but the one appeal, and that is to your consciousness. You know, your heart tells you, your conscience tells you that you are a free agent. There is no need to prove it to you. You know you have the power of choice. You know, every time a sermon is preached, the choice of life or death, holiness or sin is presented. You know, moreover, that you do every time exercise your volition as to this offer, accepting or rejecting; and if you would but consider, you would know, if you took the last step, if you chose sin. Nothing can be more convincing to a man than his intuitive judgments. Just as you know you exist (*cogito ergo sum:* I think, therefore, I am), so you know these truths. Are they not true?

The fact that the invitations of God's word and its solemn warnings are addressed to man is a proof that he has the power of choice, that he is free. "Come unto me," says the Saviour. "Look unto him," says the prophet. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," says the apostle. All these appeals of the word, inspired by the Holy Ghost, teach us this truth. It is mockery, it is cruelty to say these invitations and like passages are addressed to those not free. I cannot limit the treasures of God's grace. I preach his glorious gospel to you all. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." I say then these invitations, these offers in God's word teach us that man has the power of choice, is free to choose.

Further, man's sense of responsibility shows that he is free. If man is not a free agent he is not responsible. That is as clear as day. If I hold your hand and compel you by main force to stab another man, the law does not recognize you as guilty. If I persuade you to do it, that is,

if you consent to do it, if you will, if you choose to do it, you are alike guilty; so that the fact that a man knows that he is responsible shows that he is free. Conscience could not upbraid but that a man knows he is guilty.

You observe then that I preach that man is a free agent, acting as he chooses. (There are some who say we do not preach this, or if we do, we are inconsistent. No, my friends, as I can show you.)

Man is no mere machine, driven at the fierce decree of a being in whose relentless power he has fallen. Man is free, as I have declared; and yet he is sure to sin, he inevitably chooses the wrong in his natural state; and the reason he cannot is not because he is not free to choose the right, not because he is predestined by an adverse power, prevented thereby from acting as he chooses, but because he will not. His depravity is a depravity of will. Look at a gnarled and crooked tree. It grows just as it chooses, but it chooses to grow crooked. Man does as he chooses, but he invariably, unless renewed by divine grace, chooses to do wrong. Look at this mob of angry Jews. Could they not have chosen to have had Jesus released? Yet do you not know, did not even Pilate know, that swayed as they were then by passion, burning with mad desire for his blood, that they would choose rather to have Christ slain than set free? Or take the case of a drunkard. You are as certain as you can be of anything future, that if he is exposed to the temptation, he will get drunk. Such are his habits, so depraved is his taste that you say he cannot help it; but you do not thereby excuse him. He is free; he does what he cannot help doing because he will do it. He is free. He is responsible. He is to be blamed rather than pitied, yet both indeed.

Just so the sinner sins, so he chooses, he does it freely; but he is sure to do it. He knows he can help it if he

would choose; but he will not choose. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life," says the Saviour to the Jews. That is what we mean by depravity, *deprava* of will.

It will not do to say that when the will becomes thus depraved, responsibility is lost. To this objection I answer, in the first place, as in the outset, by appeal to fact and experience. Though your will is thus depraved, you are conscious that it is free; you feel the sting of conscience for sin, which you would not feel if you did not choose to sin. Your guilt shows your responsibility and your freedom. But again, if this objection be true, then the more depraved the will, and the more impotent a man is to resist temptation from continued indulgence; in other words, the worse he is, the more excusable he is! Monstrous doctrine. The greater drunkard a man is the more he is to be pardoned. The more a man yields to his anger the more he gluts his revenge or his passions, the less is he to be blamed? Common sense repels such a doctrine, and the conscience abhors it. Can a lost spirit, one of the fiends of darkness, cease from sinning? Is it not his nature, his will to sin? Can he help it? Yet does he not choose it, and does he not do wrong?

Understand me then; though man is depraved, that is, inclined to do what is wrong, man is free.

This is shown in the illustration of the text. Is it not true, my friends? Does not your consciousness corroborate the line of steps taken in the outset. Man has the power of choice. Man has the alternative presented him of choosing life or death, holiness or sin. Man exercises this choice.

Let me throw away that word "man"—it is too general —and say *you*. You will admit without contest what I have stated, except perhaps the last step, viz., that you do actually exercise this choice.

There is an act of the will, it may not always be conscious, every time you hear the gospel preached. When Christ is offered for your choice, as he is to you this day, you are compelled to do either one of two things—there is no middle ground—you are compelled either to accept him or to reject him. You do, in fact, exercise the power of choice. You may say the word "reject" is too hard. Well, it amounts to that; defer, hesitate, postpone, all is rejecting Christ as now offered.

And if Christ is not chosen, Barabbas is preferred. Sin the choice of the natural heart.

II. Let me now briefly show the sin of such an act.

Do you think that those furious Jews who dragged to a shameful execution the innocent Son of God and imbrued their hands in his sacred blood, that those who chose rather that the robber and cut-throat, the man who was a terror to the land, the murderer and bandit, Barabbas, should be released that their mad thirst might be quenched in the crimson tide of the faultless One, that they were sinners above all others? They were indeed basely guilty; but wherein do we differ if we despise his offers of mercy, trample upon his priceless blood, and choose for our present good, the deceitful world, the service of the prince of darkness, and the gratification of the desires of the flesh; and this choice too, notwithstanding the sad example presented us in this painful scene.

But you say the Jews could find no fault in him; and can you? Is he not even more lovely as time has proven his preciousness, and yet he is rejected by you. But you say, they had evidence of his wondrous power, his love for them, his divine mission; and have not you the like evidence, and greater, inasmuch as in addition to the testimony they had, you have the increased light of the gospel dispensation? But you say, they saw him, insulted him,

and in his presence chose Barabbas; and have not you insulted him by rejection, and chosen other than him, and though you have not seen him, do you not know that he is here? Has he not been near you? Is he not before you now?

I will not say, my friends, that you would have acted as these maddened people did, and laid your hands upon his person, and spit on him, and slain him; but I do say that as long as you reject Jesus, your sin is near akin to that of these Jews, who chose Barabbas; and your sin has this double aggravation.

1. You are not swayed by the fury of a mob as they were, with passions highly aroused, and carried with the turbulent crowd. You act calmly, deliberately, coolly, may I not add, cruelly. You hate without a cause; you reject without the excuse of a sweeping emotion.

2. You are not now acting upon this question for the first time. You have repeated the deadly sin again and again. The time was when you faced the question with the seriousness of a soul awakened to eternal things, and with deep solemnity and tears, were brought to the choice. You decided, as did these Jews, and refused Christ. This you have done again and again—perhaps even now.

3. You are the child of pious parents, the child of prayers. You know the danger. You have been warned and entreated.

I beg you then, in the exercise of your choice, to choose Jesus. Let me tell you Barabbas is a robber. Whatever you may take in preference to Jesus will be to you a robber and a murderer. It will rob you of your peace here, of your happiness hereafter. It will slay your hopes here, and your soul forever. Oh! can you hesitate, can you delay? Will you not choose, and choose now, the better part?

My dear friends, let me once more place the alternative before you—Jesus or Barabbas, life or death, holiness or sin, salvation or ruin, happiness or misery, glory or despair, heaven or hell; which will you choose? You are bound to make some choice; you are bound to do it *now.* Whatever you may think about it, you are deciding the question now, possibly you are deciding for eternity! Let me plead with you as one that loves your souls, that desires your salvation, that would clear himself of your blood; choose Jesus, and choose him now.

Do not say I cannot. If you feel the slightest desire to come to him, if you do in your inmost soul long to be his, this is the moving of the Spirit of grace. While he moves, seize the favoring opportunity.

A young lady at church gave heed to a powerful and awakening sermon, the preacher urging an immediate acceptance of Christ, and warning of the dangers of delay and putting off for a more convenient season. A few days after the young lady was dangerously ill, and sent for the preacher to come and see her. He went and found her at death's door, and yet she told him she neither wished him to pray with or talk to her, that she heard his sermon the Sunday before, and at the time had written with her pencil a certain sentence in her hymn-book, and ever since then all had been darkness, and her heart as hard as a stone. The preacher took the hymn-book and read on the fly-leaf, in the back of the book, the following fatal sentence, "I'll run the risk." A few hours more and the young woman died in the darkness of despair. She had "run the risk."

I beg you, my friends, do not run the risk.

FIRST DUTIES NEGLECTED.

A SERMON ON DUTY.

"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."—1 KINGS xx. 40.

IN ancient days God spake to his people by his prophets; and the words we have chosen as presenting to us a great and solemn truth were spoken by a prophet to Ahab, king of Israel, to teach him a lesson, to reveal to him in parable his great folly and wickedness, and God's indignant anger.

The kingdom of Israel had been in bondage to Syria now, for the reigns of Omri and Ahab and Ben-Hadad, not content with this commercial dependence, desired still further to humble and despoil Israel; but guided by the God of Israel, Ahab defeated the Syrian king in two campaigns, acting on the defensive. The first of these, with a small, well-chosen army, he wrested victory from Ben-Hahad and his thirty-two allied kings. The Syrians deemed that it was because Jehovah was the God of the hills; so the next year they renewed the assault by way of the plain of Aphek, and were again most disastrously defeated by Ahab, losing one hundred thousand slain in battle, and the king and commander himself falling a prisoner to the king of Israel. With ill-considered leniency and foolish pity, Ahab released the blasphemous assailant, who had been such an infamous scourge to Israel, and made a treaty of peace, securing recession of captured cities, and also certain commercial and royal privileges in

the capital city of Syria. This criminal weakness God rebukes by the mouth of one of his prophets. Desiring to be in the garb of a soldier, of one wounded and under charges, so he could appeal unknown to the king, he is smitten by a comrade, and takes his station by the roadside. He personates the unfaithful guard. "He cried unto the king, and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle, and behold, a man turned aside and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shall pay a talent of silver. And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." The simple statement of criminal neglect was sufficient for the soldierly instincts of the king. His decision was immediate and positive, "So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it." It is another case of Nathan and David. The prophet hastens to appear in his true character, and reveals to him in accordance with his own decree and the principles of unerring rectitude, "Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people."

The incident from the familiar usages of war, by which the prophet would give the deluded and wicked king an object lesson showing his sinful carelessness, is an incident that shows us neglect of special and imperative duty, allured by something else, which in itself might not be reprehensible, but which, leading to the sin, cannot be too strongly condemned. I think these words, occurring as they do merely as the drapery of the story, a necessary detail of the incident, yet teach us lessons not to be overlooked. "And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

1. For once we learn this truth, that to each of us is

committed some paramount obligation. If ye study God's word and God's providence, it is not difficult to learn what that is. I do not now advert to that which is the first duty of us all, to whom the Saviour's command comes, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." This being conceded, and, as we may assume, accomplished, we have laid upon each of us a divinely chosen task, a special service entrusted to our discharge. No one has any just or proper conception of life—any appreciation of its dignity and value—who is content that it be an aimless or useless one. The eager inquiry of earnest souls is, what is my mission, what my sphere, or what my immediate present duty? I take it then that this universal quest is one evidence of the statement made. Thus only can an immortal nature be made content, in the consciousness that it lives not in vain, but with a purpose, and a purpose worthy of its destiny and its capacity.

Then not only do conscience and reason affirm it, but it is the direct teaching of the word of God. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" is the inquiry of the regenerate soul. The Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work.

I shall not undertake to answer your heart's questionings. Find out your own work, the special charge committed to you. It may be to preach, it may be to cook, it may be to guide the house, it may be to mould public sentiment, to move the multitude at will; it may be to support your dependent family, it may be to suffer. An intelligent apprehension of one's own capabilities and opportunities, a prayerful study of providences that guide and environ one's life, and, above all, a faithful reference to God's will and God's word, will help you to see what is your present and immediate charge. There is a time to

laugh, there is a time to weep, there is a time to work, there is a time to rest. It is at times an imperious duty to eat, to sleep, to bathe, to sweep. Nothing is little or unworthy that becomes thus a duty, the present, immediate charge committed to us.

Take the case of a mother. What though she be a poet, an astronomer, a teacher, with gifts commanding the admiration of the world, and wonderful special power to instruct, is not her first duty to the infant she has borne? Should she say, "I have special talent or accomplishment in this direction, others can nurse and rear children; I shall commit the training of this immortal nature which God has given me to some hired woman, and I shall write books"? I know a young mother who takes her own children to their rest, and gives to no one, however dear, the last few moments when the bright eyes close. At her knee only do they say their evening prayer. She must kiss their sweet eyes shut; and this that she may exert over them that tender spiritual influence and guidance which is committed to a mother's hand, and to a mother's hand alone. It may not be the wisest method for all; but it is the true principle for all. Happy are those children that have such mothers, and happy the mothers!

Or take the case of a son, who by the self-denial of a doting father has been equipped for life. Ambition seizes his soul; lust for power or wealth or a legitimate longing for wider usefulness or nobler living leads him to seek place, influence, or venture in paths that promise success and fortune, provided he can shake off the incubus of a dependent parent, or one uncultivated. The temptation is to cut loose from these fretting ties; but is it right? A wise son honoreth his father. No; perish earthly schemes of ambition if they hinder that reverence and service due as long as either father or mother may live!

2. But the text reveals also that matters of less moment distract our attention from the first and imperative duty. In the case of that highest of all duties, for every man, woman and child, how many make shipwreck of their souls because the necessary cares of this life press aside their paramount obligation. "Take no thought saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed." Food and raiment! How many, how many lose their souls for these, sell their souls, as did Esau for a mess of pottage. It is the most necessary, perhaps, of all earthly things. Our Saviour recognizes this in this very remonstrance which he makes with such urgent tenderness; yet, as our Father knows, we have need, and will not have us suffer, let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

And how true is it also of those imperious duties of life which God imposes, that these give place to things of infinitely less importance. We pass away our precious time, we throw away our priceless privileges for a trifle that perishes. Oh! friends, let me speak to you from a bitter experience, for I preach to my own soul. Let not these clamorous and exacting engagements crowd out our main work. See here the child at school, golden opportunity. His first duty is to make good use of his advantages, to be diligent in application, nor trifle away his time, a time that never returns. Idling it away in nothing, or using it in sport, is it not true that while busy here and there, youth is gone—gone? Or see the farmer when disaster threatens his crop, or the grain is ready for the reaper. How foolish, how sinful to let other engagements take the time which if lost the damage is irreparable! There are certain seasons, when certain things are to be done, claim the first attention, and if not then accomplished, it is too late. The work of the faithful pastor is to win souls,

and train them for the Master. He must lay every power under tribute for this one purpose, and utilize every agency to this end, every social or intellectual accomplishment or attainment. But these are but the means, and must not themselves be the end. Study social intercourse, mental furnishing, ecclesiastical machinery—these, however important and necessary, should not, must not divert him from the great purpose to reach souls, to save souls, to build up the kingdom and household of believers. Oh! how I have bewailed my own inadvertence to this controlling principle, how have I frittered away the best years of life in doing this and that, and leaving undone or doing but slightly the great work of preaching! We cannot do everything. We must make up our minds, must be content, to leave some things undone. We cannot learn everything so as to understand all mysteries and all knowledge; so let us be content to pretermit some that we may master others, and do our work well. The great Agassiz, when urged to go out among men and lecture on the subjects he had studied, and was promised large remuneration, responded nobly, "I haven't time to make money;" and when it was suggested that he take some higher order of life for his study, replied, "I haven't yet mastered the mollusk." Our answer to all the seductions that would tempt us from our main work must be that of Nehemiah, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." Our key-note must be that of the energetic, consecrated and successful missionary, Paul, "This one thing I do."

3. Another solemn truth taught us by these words is that there is such a thing as opportunity, and that it may be lost. "As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone." The little one that clings to your knee and impedes your movement, the boy that climbs on your lap will soon

be away from your side, beyond your suggestion or control, out in the hard, selfish, busy, unfeeling world. If you fail to make your impress on him now, you will have lost your opportunity. While you are busy, he is gone. With what stinging sarcasm does Douglas Jerrold refer to that class of benefactors, who are so much engaged in sending flannel shirts to the African children they neglect their own; and you too, whom God hath blessed with friends, is not some one committed to your charge, whom your example and your teaching may mould to usefulness and honor; your comrade, your class-mate, your pupil, what royal privilege has God given you, what solemn responsibility is yours! Keep him as your life, lest while you are busy here and there, he is gone; and you, who have youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them, this is your opportunity. Waste it, misuse it, throw it away, and your life will be filled with bitter and unavailing regret. Now is the time to form habits of character, to learn application and self-denial, to lay the foundations broad and deep for future usefulness; and this time lost, it is lost forever. With what anxiety do I watch the young, heedless, unthinking, growing into maturity with untrained minds, unstored memories, undeveloped capacities, to harden and be forever crippled in the race of life. The tree may be shaped while a sapling, but if allowed to grow uncared for will be dwarfed here and crooked there, and can never be the tree it might have been. Before the plaster becomes set and rigid apply the mould.

But, Christian brethren, let me entreat and warn you as one who has himself suffered, make use of opportunity. Of all the bitter memories, none are so poignant as the recollection of unimproved opportunity, wasted time. The lost opportunity, the lost opportunity, oh! even in heaven,

it would seem, the remembrance would bring pain. It is not a disappointed ambition, nor a thwarted purpose; but the sting is in the wilful or careless misuse of golden privilege.

The Apostle Paul hoped to preach in the city of the Cæsars, and on its crowded streets, to its power and culture, to proclaim the Nazarene. It was the hope and dream of his life; but it was only as a prisoner he was there, and without the splendid chances he had at Corinth and Athens. Yet chained day by day to one soldier, he unfolded to that one the kingdom of heaven, so that all the pretorian guard, and many of Cæsar's household, became permeated with Christian teaching.

The captain of the *Queen* states that crossing the stormy sea, he was hailed by an ocean steamer in distress. It was the ill-fated *Central America,* with the gallant Captain Herndon in command. The night was black, the sea yeasty and inky, and rolling great billows. He urged the transfer of the passengers, notwithstanding the peril and the darkness. "Lie by me to-night, and wait for daylight," was the reply. It may have been seamanlike and wise; but a heavier swell than usual drifted the *Queen* away, and an immense sea swept over, and when the morning came, with all diligence and watching, no trace of the vessel could be seen, and it was supposed that with all on board it sank to the bottom of the sea. The opportunity lost, it was forever too late.

I thank God for this opportunity to-day. More and more, as I grow older, and time slips from me, do I feel the value of each such privilege. I may be preaching to some one to-day to whom I shall never speak again. Oh! if you are God's servant, do not have to say to him, when he calls you to answer for privilege and opportunity, "Thy servant was busy here and there, the opportunity was lost."

IS THE YOUNG MAN SAFE?

ON THE YOUNG MAN'S PERIL.

"And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe?"—2 SAMUEL xviii. 29.

THERE are few stories more thrilling and few scenes more pathetic than the account given by the sacred historian of Absalom's rebellion and fall, and David's deep grief over his dead son. Very valuable and impressive are the lessons taught us in the simple and graphic record; and as we read the narrative now our feelings are strongly moved, and the whole portraiture is so vivid we see the actors in the eventful drama. The old king, the great warrior, the trampling of whose armies and the thunder of whose fame every nation knew, is the principal figure. How bowed and broken, how changed from the ruddy boy on the hills of Bethlehem—the sturdy youth whose faith and prowess slew Goliath; or the gallant and handsome general who led Saul's armies to battle and victory and married the king's daughter! Now he is old, feeble, and despised; cursed by a slave, driven from his throne and his capital by the rebellion of his own son and the treachery of his chosen counsellors and friends. And then the eye rests on the man who brought this distress and bitter disgrace—the handsome, spoiled, indulged and self-willed son, Absalom. The oldest living, and the rightful heir, looking upon the throne as his, and his father as decrepit and incompetent, he plots his overthrow. Young, gay, handsome, gallant, a prince from

two royal lines, of most gracious manners, and captivating, crowned with all that wit, beauty, station or opulence could afford, graceful, courteous and winning, the people's idol, the king's beloved; what a brilliant future opened before him! And how diverse the end!

Of the steps in the progress of the rebellion I need not speak; how by artful insinuation he implanted distrust of the king and dissatisfaction with his rule, how by his personal beauty and courteous manner he stole the hearts of the people; how David fled, and Absalom entered his capital and his palace, and publicly humiliated the royal household; how he marshalled his army, but by unwise delay allowed the dispirited king to rally his forces.

Under experienced generals the armies met. David himself, the grand old hero, placed himself at the head of his troops, but they would not allow it, and made him remain at Mahanaim overlooking the plain and wood of Ephraim. Well-appointed and officered, fresh and confident, the forces of Absalom joined battle with those of David under Joab, weak and disheartened. In the rolling plain lying off from Mahanaim, terminating in wood, a deeply wooded slope of lofty terebinth and palm and dense undergrowth, did the conflict take place. Never before had the sound of battle been heard there—the trampling of hoofs, the hurtle of spears and the sharp cries of the wounded, in a bitter strife of brethren. Directing the battle the ambitious Absalom, riding swiftly through the tangled forest, was caught by his head in the low branches of an outspreading tree—a great oak, as many suppose—by that beautiful and heavy hair which adorned him, of which special mention is made; his crown of effeminate beauty being made, in the retributive justice of God, the means of his death. He must have been painfully and inextricably entangled to have hung for so

long a time. Spared by the one who first saw him, he was slain by Joab and his armor-bearers, and hurriedly and rudely buried in disgrace.

It seemed that Joab feared to send news so unwelcome to the king by the hand of a friend. By Cushi, an Ethiopian and probably a slave, he sent the tidings, but granting to Ahimaaz, David's friend and the son of the priest, permission also, he outstripped Cushi, and first reached the monarch and gave the news of victory and peace. The very first inquiry of the king was, "Is the young man, Absalom, safe?" Of this David's friend did not speak; possibly he did not know; but Cushi bore the sad news. Then came that outburst of parental grief, that pathetic wail of a father's helpless agony, "Oh my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee; O Absalom, my son, my son." So great was his sorrow that the joy of the victory and deliverance on the part of the people was changed into mourning.

I do not wish to attempt the grouping of the noticeable facts of the whole story. The earnest, anxious question of David, who was a father as well as a king, suggests, it seems to me, some valuable inquiries; and this appeared an appropriate time, while so many were at home from study, to present this serious and important thought. Is the young man safe? And so striking an illustration occurs in the case of Absalom himself by which to impress it. Need I stop here to speak of the importance of that season we call youth? So much depends on a wise use of these golden years that I wish I could say something to teach their inestimable value. It is a time of growth, of formation of principles, of habits, a season that shapes, oh! so much, the destiny of after years and of eternity, on whose thoughtful and well-directed employment so much of present and future happiness depends, that if I could

reach the ears of the children and of the young, I would beg them to seek superior wisdom to tell them how to spend the time.

1. Is the young man safe who is disobedient and disrespectful to his parents? This was Absalom's character. If in any respect it is yours, my young friend, I tell you there is danger in your path.

This is a fault and a characteristic of the age on which I have before spoken with severity. It is one of the sad signs of the times that there is not the same respect for age, the same deference to position and authority, the same reverence for parents as of old. I do not know whether it may not be the fruit, the natural outgrowth of that spirit of fanaticism and utter disregard of divinely constituted relations, that having denounced and abused and eventually abolished the relation of master and slave, and next attacked the citadel of domestic peace and security, and made the dissolution of the marriage relation criminally easy, would obliterate the bond of husband and wife; now seeks to do away with the tie between father and child. However accounted for, it is painfully apparent that disobedience to parents is growing more and more common.

Now remember that God institutes the relation. A child is under government. It is right, for God has so imposed it. It is best for the child. In a mysterious law of nature there is placed in the parent's heart the instinct of love, of protection, of parental care; there is placed likewise in the heart of children the feeling of dependence, trust and helplessness. God has imposed these relations; and we cannot sin against God's law with impunity.

This obedience too must partake of the nature of deference. The command is *honor* thy father and thy mother; and the reward is that most longed for, a long life. Too

much of obedience is sulky, unwilling, and rendered under protest, and with a sort of contemptuous or supercilious air. Yes, you may know more than she who bore you, and who has denied herself even your presence that you may receive advantages she never had; but she deserves your honor and love and obedience, and God's law enjoins it. No young man is safe who disregards his father's counsels or his mother's wishes. His opportunities of judgment may be better, and his range of vision wider, and so it may happen that the counsel of his own mind may be better; but a reasonable and an affectionate parent can see with your eyes.

And then much is due them even from the lower principle of gratitude—what have they done and suffered and borne for you. What pain, what anxiety, what agony you have necessarily caused them. Add no unnecessary burden. Bear with their weakness. Soothe their sorrows. Help them to bear the burden of age and infirmity.

The young man who learns to speak lightly, to name disrespectfully his parents, is far on the road to danger and sin.

2. I remark, secondly, the young man is in danger who is filled with an unholy ambition. This too is most strikingly illustrated in the case of Absalom. A lust for power, a conceit of his own abilities, an indulgence of vanity of person and then of influence, were among the steps that led to his great crime. Gifted with ready wit, a winning manner and personal beauty, he was in danger from the very considerations that were reasons of thankfulness and congratulation. He indulged his vanity, he practiced deceit, he ingratiated himself with the populace in order that he may lay hands on the crown, nor await the tardy death of his illustrious father or risk the chances of a change in the succession.

I often look upon young men whom God has richly dowered with feelings of fear and anxiety. Well may a young man be thankful if God has given him a good name to inherit, a fair competence from the labor and self-denial of parents, talents of high order, and attractiveness of manner and person; but it is a dangerous dower. Great prudence is needed to conduct wisely through the temptations that beset the path of the favorites of fortune.

And when an improper ambition sways the heart of any young man, any unholy purpose, whether to win fame, to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, to amass riches, to secure prominence and office, when he bends every energy to secure his cherished aim, then comes the perilous sacrifice of principle, of truth; a cultivation of popularity through deceit and flattery, a retention of unjust gains, and, in one form or other, sin and vice come trooping after his footsteps. He is in the way of danger.

You may say this is no peril to you, no description of your case; yet it may be. It is not so much the importance of the goal set before one as the motive that prompts to its attainment to which I refer. The influence of a high and holy purpose is exalting and ennobling. The very same goal may be to two persons, and even to the same under different circumstances both pure and improper. If Absalom had studied to become a wise prince, a useful ruler, if he had sought influence only with such thoughts in view, if he had considered his father's infirmities and preoccupation, and aided him in the administration of justice and of government, who would not have said he was a discreet prince and deserved praise? Instead, personal ambition was his motive. He sought to subvert, to supplant, to overturn, to gratify a desire for power, for show, for pride.

This is a temptation that comes in a higher or lower

degree to us all—the desire for influence, the love of applause, the itching for popularity; and a young man among his comrades is specially open to it. To be a leader in studies, in frolicks, in fun and sport, in more manly or intellectual competitions—watch your hearts! An evil motive vitiates the best performance. Lay it down as a maxim: A low purpose lowers the character. An unholy ambition, even in what is right, is full of danger.

3. I remark in the third place, the young man is not safe who has evil counsellors and companions.

Of all the perils to which young men especially are exposed, whether in cities or in the country, in business or in college, this is one most full of mischief, as one that leads to so much worse. It is through evil associates the bad habits are first formed—the gentlemanly vices, as they are called. I doubt whether any one would ever learn to smoke or to chew were it not for example and the desire to be mannish and to do like others. This is the way swearing is learned; this is the way drinking, gaming and worse social sins are learned. The habit is begun by the temptations of evil company. The ear becomes accustomed to ribald jests, to obscene stories, the heart becomes callous, insensible, and loses tenderness of conscience.

Then come all the temptations of vanity and pride. One's companions do so, and therefore must he. The spendthrift, wasting in loose living the hard-earned means of an industrious father, squandering handsome estates, with fast horses, fast men and fast women, soon becomes utterly reprobate.

Young man, as far as it is practicable, associate with no one whom you would not readily introduce to your mother, or trust the honor of your name. Go away from reckless talkers and livers; avoid ungodly, profane, licentious, even idle companions as you would the plague.

There is danger, there is danger. No young man is safe who chooses such associates. He deliberately puts himself in the jaws of a lion. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

4. The young man is in danger, I remark, who, confident in his own strength, dallies with temptation.

The Latins have a maxim, *Facile descensus Averni* ("The descent to ruin is easy"). It is the first step that costs. It is the first glass, the first oath, the first game, that begins the course of evil. Never take this first step, and all is well; but many feeling that there is no danger, to show their independence and their strength, put themselves in the way of evil, and expose themselves to temptation; or indulge to show they can. You are on the edge of the quicksand. Such are those who go with a boon companion to a saloon and decline a drink, who frequent billiard rooms and gambling halls merely to look on and see what is done.

A like danger is that of the one who, confident of his mental powers, delights to tread the border-land of free-thought in order to know both sides; reads skeptical treatises and seeks to show his acuteness by retailing the doubt and then overthrowing it. There is danger, young man, in such speculative tendencies. The Bible courts criticism and study; but such conduct is like that of a man who, knowing from observation the effects of poison on the system and the beneficent effect of some remedy, should learn both experiences by tasting the poison. Better never taste the poison.

5. The young man is in danger who habitually cultivates evil thoughts, who harbors wilfully any bad passion or wicked desire. A rooted evil long indulged is harder

to eradicate than a noxious weed that grows up in a night. For two years Absalom plotted the death of Amnon. For three years he lived in a heathen king's court. For ten years he sought power to overturn the kingdom. He was, all during these years, fair, courteous and doubtless without any sign of that deep malevolence that was to break out.

Thoughts of lust, of revenge, of envy, of avarice—any evil passion—hardens the heart, drives away the Spirit, and is fraught with great danger to the soul.

6. Let me say further that the young man who makes light of duty, even the smallest duty, is in great danger. To disregard the right, to be without settled convictions, to undervalue principle in anything, is to sail into an ocean without pilot, compass or chart—without, rather, a helmsman and a helm. It is a dismantled wreck, a wretched hulk. Danger is in the glistening, glassy wave; danger is in the shining sand; danger is in the very air.

The young man who neglects his Bible, who neglects secret prayer, who forgets his mother's parting requests, who forgets duty, is in danger. Here is where the danger begins—in neglect of some known duty.

7. And last let me say in answer to the question, "Is the young man Absalom safe," no young man is safe who is out of Christ, who is not a Christian. Ye are complete in him; but to be without Christ is to be an alien and a stranger; to be without hope and without God in the world, without hope and without God in the world—think of it.

Young man, life lies before you like a summer sea. Smooth and enchanting are its waters. Lovely islands in the distance lure your untried oar. That sea is deceitful and treacherous. Those islands of the blest have swift, receding shores. Hear the voice of wisdom, of experience,

of piety. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me."

The Christian only is truly brave. He can meet all enemies. The Christian only is truly happy. His heart is satisfied in Christ. His will is always gratified, because his will is God's. The Christian only is safe. "My sheep hear my voice, and they shall never perish." His riches are secure, for they are laid up in heaven. Nothing can harm him, and all things work together for his good. I could wish you no higher blessing. Believe me, from the bottom of my heart I wish you this.

Then the anxious cry of a devoted father or a tender mother, "Is the young man safe?" may be answered promptly, gladly. Yes, come what may, he is safe, safe, safe.

There are some further lessons of more general application to which I shall briefly advert in closing.

1. The best natural advantages which a young man may possess are no adequate safeguard. They give no positive assurance of safety. Absalom had a wise and pious father. He was a prince-royal, and had all that royalty could give. He had not only station and wealth, but talent and comeliness; but all these without religious principle, without character, are nothing.

2. We see how parental infidelity is punished. David was indulgent, unduly fond, and never controlled this wayward son. His mother was a heathen woman. The poor king's sin, oh! how grievously it was rewarded. As God had forewarned him by Nathan, he met his punishment for his adultery and crime, from those of his own house. It was his favorite son, whose sins he condoned over and over, that put the bitter chalice to his lips.

3. We see an illustration of parental anxiety and love.

In no literature is there so affecting a lament as this of David over Absalom, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

I have stood by the grave when was lowered the hope and joy and pride of a father's and mother's heart; the light of a home gone out in darkness. Who can measure the speechless agony of such a grief?

Oh! young man, wherever your wayward steps may turn, remember how warm and true a mother's love, and a father's heart. In the silence of night, how often they pray for the absent! When sickness comes, how anxious they become! With what eagerness they ask, "Is the young man safe?" Remember them.

4. Once more, I beg you to see in this affecting incident a hint of the infinite love of God, and his yearning pity over wandering sinners. He is a Father—our Father which is in heaven. With a father's strong and yearning love, with a mother's warm and tender feeling, he pleads with you, "My son, give me thy heart."

CHRISTIAN COURAGE.

A SERMON ON COURAGE.

"Add to your faith, virtue."—2 PETER i. 5.

THE development of character has ever been an interesting study of mental and spiritual philosophy. At so many points the subject touches grand and kindred sciences, that a wide and diverse range is presented to the student of psychological phenomena, of the mental phases of the soul. Christianity by no means abjures science, but seeks and utilizes its aid and glorifies its results. The workings of the soul in the apprehension of truth, the effect of belief on action, the relation of principle to life, the power of motive and emotion—these are all valuable and attractive themes, suggested by the apostle's catalogue of Christian characteristics; but perhaps they are better suited to the class-room of the student of mental and moral science than to the purpose of public instruction in Christian duty.

Yet we cannot but notice the correlation of this wonderful list given with sententious conciseness by the sturdy apostle. What relation has the virtue here referred to to faith? what is its dependence? In like manner, why should knowledge be next, and what is its subsidiary attitude towards virtue?

Add to your faith virtue. Given that there is faith, the vital principle, the rooting of the plant, the natural development of Christian character demands virtue—*virtus*—manliness, that which makes a man a hero, a *vir* as dis-

tinguished from *homo;* an individual instead of a race—manhood. Perhaps the best paraphrase of the word into the speech of to-day is "courage." Add to your faith courage. The word add, too, has a beautiful etymological meaning which we should remember. It means literally "to join hand in hand." Faith leads, and next follows, with hand locked with faith, courage, and then grace in turn leads knowledge. The grace of courage goes hand in hand with faith on the one side and knowledge on the other. It is led by faith, it is ballasted or checked by knowledge.

Is it not so?

The courage that is here spoken of is well defined by the phrase familiar in modern literature, and known as the courage of one's convictions. This courage follows an intelligent apprehension of the truth. It indicates a conscience not only quick and unswerving, but well instructed. It means sacrifice, endurance and daring. When the soul is enlightened, and there are indeed just views of the obligations that rest upon it, and of relation to others, to God to self, to home, to the household of faith, to a sinful world—this courage means that at whatever cost, the right must be pursued.

True courage does not mean an over-estimate of one's powers. It is no ally of self-esteem, or self-conceit, or self-trust. It is not akin to foolhardiness, to that disposition to court danger, either to show one's skill in eluding, or one's prowess in overcoming the enemy. It is ever connected with good sense, with prudence, with thoughtfulness. Nor does courage consist in any depreciation of the dangers in the path. There are dangers. They are real, they are many. There are enemies; they are cunning, unscrupulous and truculent. True courage puts a just estimate on the difficulties to be met, the perils to be

borne. A true fear and a true courage may be in the same bosom.

A story is told of one of our most distinguished Christian generals during the late war. A fierce firing had opened, and the scream of shell and shot rang over the heads of a group of officers, and deadly dangers thickened and darkened the air. There was need of calmness and composure. One young lieutenant flippantly and boastingly remarked, "That's music to me; I don't know what fear is." The commanding officer quietly replied, "If you are a stranger to fear, you are a stranger to courage. You deserve no credit for facing the enemy. It is nothing to you. Those of us who are afraid and yet go into battle, we need courage and show it."

The courage that is not mere untamed animal spirits—sturdy strength that belongs to weak and frail men, to timid and modest women, the courage that is born of faith, of belief in God, of conviction of duty, of a sense of accountability, of a view of judgment and eternal truth and justice—this is the courage to which the apostle refers, the manhood that proves and follows faith, and shows Christian character.

I have thought, my dear friends, that in addressing you to-day, and giving you the keynote of living for another year, the motto and rule of daily conduct, the battle-cry of the church's warfare, I could not do better than to utter these words of the Christian leader, to transmit them as a ringing order on the field of danger, "Add to your faith virtue;" and I wish to give some homely and practical counsels as to the need of Christian courage, and then give some reasons and encouragements for its exercise.

1. Christian courage is needed in the first place to confess Christ publicly.

It was doubtless with reference to this plain and necessary duty that the injunction was first spoken. Hast thou faith? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Then have courage to avouch allegiance to him—"add to your faith virtue."

And in those days, what did this mean? "I came," says the Son of man, "not to bring peace, but a sword." A man's foes shall be they of his own household. To confess Christ then required courage. It meant desertion of friends and kindred, loss of home and love, of good name and estate. It meant poverty, obloquy, betrayal, aye, often a bloody grave. As one of the most eloquent of living preachers has said:

"When the world respects the rites and institutions of religion, it is an easy matter to assume the name of Christian; but the profession of Christianity is a very different thing, when the official is seen disentangling the thongs of the knotted lash; when the headsman runs his nail over the keen edge of the gleaming axe; when the torturer stirs the fagots under the red bars of the iron griddle; when the executioner jags the nails and clanks the spikes which are to mangle while they transfix the hands and feet to the cross; when the hungry lion howls round the amphitheatre, and famished dogs stand ready to gnaw the skulls which roll from the dripping scaffold—ah! then it is a different matter to espouse the cause which exposes its professor to terrors like these."

Such were the dangers which those braved who took upon them the name of Jesus. Surely it needed courage; and, though now no such ordeal faces the timid soul trusting in Christ, it needs something of the same spirit to-day to confess him. The torture is not physical, the appeal is not made through corporeal suffering to the soul's anguish; but ridicule, shame, selfishness, indolence, sarcasm

and jeers, these have their mighty influence. How many a hesitating believer is hindered by fear of ungodly companions, by the laugh or the taunt of associates, by the dread of appearing singular or peculiar, by the expectation of criticism. It takes more courage for one alone to confess Christ than when multitudes are openly acknowledging him.

Do I speak to any to-day who have been long convinced that it was their duty to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? who, satisfied that they were sinners and needed a Saviour, and knowing the terms of salvation, faith and confession, have delayed, held back by first one excuse and another, one fear and another? Add to your faith courage. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed." Venture on him; venture wholly. Let no other trust intrude. Let this be your first deed of courage this year, confess Christ.

2. But if it needs courage in the present day to confess Christ publicly, by uniting with his household, much more is it needed to live Christ.

To the soul, assailed as were those in the times when Peter wrote, the great struggle was in the first step. To yield home and love and comfort, to embrace trial and shame and desertion and death in embracing Christ, this demanded indeed the highest style of courage. The soul, conscious of what was before, made its solemn, its determined choice.

Now it is easy to assume the name of Christ; it is, to use the phrase of society, it is fashionable. There are no sudden and painful severances; there are no open tortures; there are no bloody crosses. It is indeed very respectable—quite the thing—to be a member of the church.

Ah! but it is hard to be a Christian! It takes grace. It takes faith; it takes courage. To let your religion bridle your tongue, guard your thoughts, set a watch on the door of your lips, cause you to walk circumspectly towards them that are without; to let your religion go into your speech, into your life, into your pocket, into your heart; to let your religion go into your pantry and kitchen, and make you deal justly and kindly there; into your cooking, into your ploughing, into your lending, into your studying, into your selling, into your buying, into your home, into your store, into your work; to let your religion reveal itself not by profession, but by life—anywhere, everywhere—on the cars, in the fair grounds, in the hotels, on the steamers, in New York as well as at home, among young people as well as old, among ungodly people as well as the pious—this requires some of that same old-time courage that would face the scaffold and the stake.

In the present day, worldliness in the church, skepticism or formalism, among professors of religion, the arrogance of reason towards faith on the one hand, and the pharisaism of cant towards serious calmness on the other—these things demand that those who have faith should add thereto courage.

3. This leads me, in the third place, to speak of the need of courage in witnessing a good confession with reference to those within the pale of the church.

To be warm when others are cold and indifferent, to be energetic and hopeful when others are slothful and dead, to be charitable to the manifest failings of fellow-Christians and just to their excellences, not to judge our neighbor for whom Christ died—this is to have true courage. To suffer under God's hand rebuke and chastening without murmuring, to have faithful and trusted

friends forsake or grow cold, to be charged with false motive and iniquitous principle or practice unjustly, and bear with meekness for Christ's sake, these things test Christian character; and alas! how few of us can stand the test!

But, my friends, truth is invincible—

> "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,
> The eternal years of God are hers."

With truth as the pole-star, duty is easy to know; and with faith governing the soul, courage enables one to do his duty.

This is hard, and requires the noblest type of courage, when honest differences arise between the children of God. "One believeth he may eat all things; another who is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Where principle is involved, where there is honest conviction of duty, be true, be firm, whatever opposition assails or temptations entice.

Let me illustrate this: When moral reforms claim the Christian's aid and allegiance, the very excellence and desirableness of the ends to be gained oftentimes overbear conscientious convictions. True courage must meet fanaticism as well as infidelity. So is it with regard to what is called revival measures. All who love Jesus, all who love souls and feel their unspeakable value and danger, long to see sinners converted, long to see true reviving of the church. To oppose what seems so desirable, because the means are to quick consciences false and misleading, needs wisest courage.

Let there be amongst all an intelligent apprehension

of the cardinal doctrines of faith. Let there be utter disregard of the opinions of men, especially ungodly men. Let there be the highest sense of duty, and the earnest effort to reach the highest attainable plane of consecration. This is what the apostle means when he says, "Add to your faith virtue."

The Christian world has been within the last two months celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Luther, a man whose courage conquered the world—the lion-hearted. He had, like Paul, the courage of his convictions. He endured the loss of all things because he added to faith courage. He opened the seals that closed the word of God, and gave it to his countrymen in their own tongue. He broke the chains of superstition which had been forged by Rome, and braved the fury of pope and council, to proclaim the grand truth, "the just shall live by faith."

Be true to your colors. Be true as a Christian. Be true as a Protestant. Be true as a Presbyterian. Have the courage of your convictions, and stand by your flag. With charity towards all, with malice toward none, cherish the truth; buy the truth and sell it not. Keep consciences void of offence.

And now as reason and encouragement for the exercise of this lofty courage.

1. I urge, first, the higher the standard the more assured will victory be. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Momentum is the product of weight and movement. A small body must have high rate of speed to have a momentum equal to a large body moving slowly. The soul that is animated by a high and lofty purpose can resist aggression with far more ease and success than he who is weak in motive and vacillating in action. The brave heart wins. Plant the flag forward and rally on

the colors is the way to advance the line and drive the enemy from the field. Few arrows can reach the soaring eagle; but the lark and quail, whose flight is near the earth, are easily snared and slain. So is it; but few temptations can reach and assail the soul of lofty purpose, while he that grovels in the dust is in the path of the weakest.

2. In the second place, courage tells on the world. Carlyle never said a truer thing than when he said, "The world dearly loves a hero." Courage is the manliest attribute of manhood. To see one in God's image, with head erect and noble, well-knit and sturdy frame, and limbs graceful and shapely, endowed with strength, agility, endurance, courage, is to see the noblest of God's creatures; but superior as the soul to the body, momentous as eternity is to time, graced as heaven to earth, such is that moral grandeur of the courageous spirit.

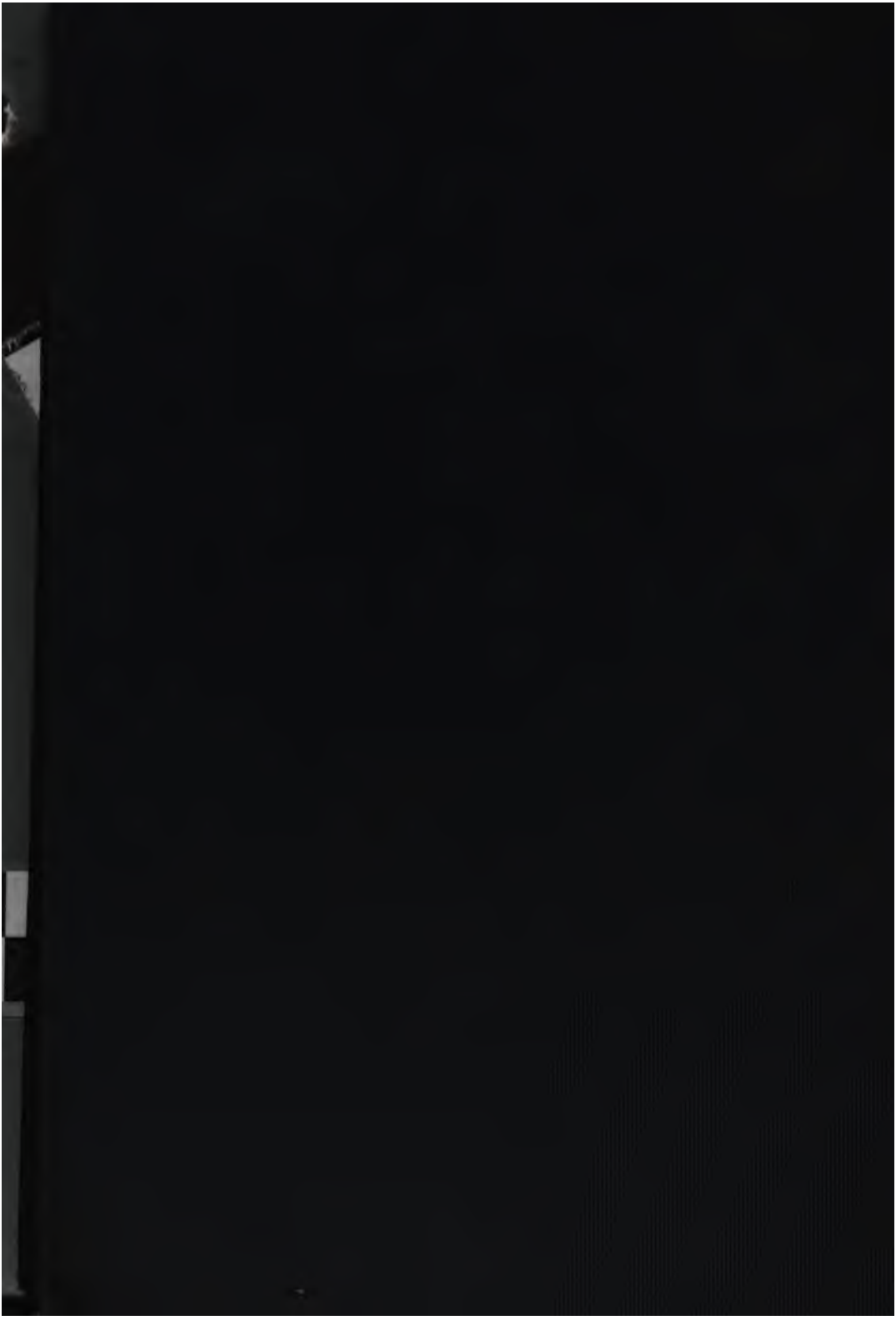
Nothing is so effective, nothing is so splendid as Christian heroism, the facing of danger for the sake of principle. It captures the world. Luther at the Diet of Worms, John Knox before Queen Mary, Paul before Agrippa, these are heroes. Yes, and there are martyrs today, though no glittering steel severs jewelled necks, or fagots kindle at their feet. The young man who resists temptation when assailed by companions whom he esteems, the young girl who refuses to yield to social usages for principle's sake, these show true heroism, and its influence is felt. Queen Victoria, when a maiden of eighteen, declining an invitation that led her from the place of prayer, closed the door to dissipation.

3. Once more. True courage is the badge of loyalty to Jesus. The way to win the Christian race is not only to be encouraged by the witness-bearers on every hand, but look unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of faith.

NOW THE DAY IS OVER.

Slowly sinks the setting sun,
Now the work of day is done;
Lord, we come a thankful throng,
Raise to thee our evening song.

For thy tender care bestowed,
For thy pardoning blood which flowed;
For thy love that crown our days,
Lord, accept our grateful praise.

And when sets life's weary sun,
When the toil of earth is done,
To thy home of peaceful rest,
Lord, receive us, ever blest.

For the robe, the palm, the blood,
May we always praise our God;
And with all the ransomed throng,
Swell high heaven's triumphant song.